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ABSTRACT

It is essential that communities, businesses, parents, and students work together to develop a disciplined environment for children which includes safe and drug-free schools. Emphasizing the need for commitment and community will, this guide outlines steps each of these groups can take to create safe schools. Communities must place school safety high on their agendas, and they must involve parents and citizens. They should conduct school site assessments, create a safe school plan, and foster an educational climate. Communities must be able to evaluate progress. Lists of information on issues affecting school safety include the following: juvenile gun violence prevention in schools, weapon and drug searches, student athlete drug testing, truancy, uniforms, alternative education programs for expelled students, conflict resolution, mentoring in schools, information sharing, and effective data collection for safe public schools. A list of further resources, such as federal clearinghouses, is supplied. A list of 47 references, organized by topic, is provided. (RJM)

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AN ACTION GUIDE

A Partnership between
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice
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Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools

An Action Guide

September 1996

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Action Steps 7

Action Steps for Schools 9
Action Steps for Students 11
Action Steps for Parents 13
Action Steps for Community and Business Groups 15

Information Briefs 17

Preventing Juvenile Gun Violence in Schools 19
Searches for Weapons and Drugs 33
Drug Testing Student Athletes 41
Truancy 47
Uniforms 57
Alternative Education Programs for Expelled Students 63
Conflict Resolution 71
Mentoring in Schools 79
Information Sharing and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 87
Effective Data Collection for Safe Public Schools: Exemplary Practices 93

Research and Evaluation Findings A-1

Student Victimization at School A-3
Student Strategies To Avoid Harm at School A-11
How Safe Are the Public Schools? What Do Teachers Say? A-19

Resources B-1

Additional Readings C-1

Contact Information D-1

Introduction

Introduction

The issue of school safety is a shared concern. Today, more than ever, it is essential that communities, businesses, parents, and students work together to develop a disciplined environment where learning can take place. Providing safe and drug-free schools is a cornerstone for achieving a world-class education.

Most of all, creating safe and orderly schools is about commitment and community will. Accomplishing such a goal requires families, schools, and community leaders to articulate the quality of the educational environment they want to provide for youth and to collaboratively develop the strategies that will produce the desired results. Achieving this significant objective requires school and community leaders to assess where they are, plan where they want to be, implement a a series of comprehensive strategies to bridge the difference, and evaluate their progress.

Essential ingredients for creating safe, orderly, drug-free schools include:

- **Placing school safety high on the educational agenda.** Such a priority involves making a personal and community commitment toward creating a safe, welcoming, respectful, gun- free, and drug-free school.

- **Involving parents and citizens.** No plan can succeed without the participation of parents and citizens in the community. Planners must make certain to bring these participants to the table often to shape strategies and programs together. Most people dislike having things "done to them." However, they enjoy being a part of planning, carrying out, and evaluating programs in which they have invested concern and time. Those affected by Safe School Plans should be involved throughout the entire process.

- **Building and developing the team.** Making schools safe is a joint responsibility, requiring a broad-based team and a working attitude emphasizing collaboration and cooperation. Team members should include educators, parents, students, law enforcers, community and business leaders, probation and court representatives, social service and health care providers, and other youth-serving professionals.

- **Conducting the school site assessment.** Team members should determine the specific issues and concerns that the local community believes are most important. This step begins the process of developing a meaningful Safe School Plan that will foster an increased level of community commitment.

- **Reviewing the law.** The law is at the heart of every major school safety issue today. Laws are intended to articulate the reasonable standards that define the delicate balance between student rights and student responsibilities. The law proclaims what must be done, implies what should be done, and establishes limits for what may be done. The law constitutes a code of professional expectations for school administrators and youth-serving

professionals. As planning begins, school and community leaders should consult with the school district's attorneys to ensure that legal issues are appropriately addressed. Constitutional issues, as well as other concerns ranging from adequate liability insurance to the effective screening of volunteers, may arise with the implementation of a comprehensive violence prevention program.

- ❑ **Creating a Safe School Plan.** This is an action plan that not only includes the substance of what is necessary to accomplish but also identifies the processes by which those goals will be achieved, including short-term objectives and long-term systemic changes. It is most important for team members to understand that they can make a positive difference in the quality of life for themselves, their community, and all the children they serve.

- ❑ **Formulating a contingency plan.** Having a backup plan for handling emergencies and crises simply makes good sense. Such foresight can prevent a crisis and preclude successive crises while creating an effective mechanism for managing school problems.

- ❑ **Creating an educational climate.** Team members should evaluate the current education atmosphere and propose modifications that will transform it into a safe, vibrant learning environment in which students and teachers respect each other.

- ❑ **Searching for ways to serve students and ways students can serve.** Young people should always be included as part of the solution to the problems associated with juvenile delinquency. Actively engaging students in school and community projects and activities creates a level of ownership that supports the success of every child.

- ❑ **Getting the message out/communicating.** Working with the media may be one of the most successful strategies for building awareness of both the issues involved and the progress being made. With simple newsletters, schools can share success stories and break down barriers with other districts and schools.

- ❑ **Evaluating progress.** It is important to monitor activities, measure impact, and evaluate how the plan is working. A Safe School Plan should be modified and improved whenever necessary.

These guidelines represent the beginning of a continuing team process to create safe schools for all of America's children. Making schools safe requires a total community effort within the context of a broad spectrum of opportunities. There are no simple solutions to making schools safe. Each school and each school district has its own unique challenges and resources with which to address them.

This *Action Guide* begins with action steps for schools, parents, students, and community and business groups. Next it provides information briefs on specific issues affecting school safety. Other sectons contain research and evaluation findings, a list of resources, and additional readings. This information is all designed to help school and community leaders, parents, and students develop a strategy to ensure safe schools in their communities.

Action Steps

Action Steps for Schools

Some of the ways in which schools can ensure safety and discipline are:

- ❑ Establish a team of educators, students, parents, law enforcement and juvenile justice officials, and community and business leaders to develop a plan for creating a safe, disciplined, gun- and drug-free school.

- ❑ Develop a Safe School Plan based upon an examination of problems and resources and a review of strategies that work.

- ❑ Ensure that students are engaged in school work that is challenging, informative, and rewarding. When students are fully engaged and absorbed, they are less prone to violence and less likely to be disruptive.

- ❑ Establish, publish, publicize, and enforce policies that clearly define acceptable and unacceptable behavior. These policies should include zero tolerance for weapons, violence, gangs, and use or sale of alcohol and drugs.

- ❑ Work with law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies for support in reporting violations of weapons policies as well as other delinquent or criminal behavior.

- ❑ Take immediate action on all reports of drug use or sales, threats, bullying, gang activity, or victimization. Anyone caught bringing a gun to school should be reported immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- ❑ Create an environment that encourages parents and other adults to visit the school and participate in the school's activities. Develop a sense of community within the school.

- ❑ Encourage staff to treat each other and students with respect and to act as good role models.

- ❑ Encourage community members to support schools in their community and to participate in school programs and services that promote the safety of students and all school staff.

- ❑ Work with community groups and law enforcement officials to keep schools open after normal operating hours so that students and their families have places where they can engage in productive, well-supervised, and safe activities. Help create safe corridors to and from school.

- ❑ Involve youth in program and policy development.

- ❑ Offer programs that teach peaceful, nonviolent methods for managing conflict to students and their families, as well as to staff.

- ❑ Work with the media to make the public aware of the crime and safety issues that confront the schools. Provide accurate assessments of school crime and violence to the public.

- ❑ Learn about effective practices based on research and proven programs used in other districts. Share the knowledge.

- ❑ Monitor implementation and progress of the Safe School Plan, making improve-ments based on what is learned as well as on new developments in the field.

Action Steps for Students

Students have an important role to play in ensuring that their schools are safe and orderly. They can take steps to help make their schools places where learning can take place without disruption and without the fear of being victimized or bullied. They can:

- ❑ Participate in, or help develop, student government organizations and guidelines that promote a drug- and gun-free, safe, and orderly environment for learning.
- ❑ Volunteer to serve on decisionmaking or advisory committees such as the group developing the overall Safe School Plan.
- ❑ Become advocates for programs such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, peer assistance leadership, teen courts, or anger management.
- ❑ Reduce conflict situations rather than making them worse. Practice good citizenship, and treat peers and teachers with respect.
- ❑ Report weapon possession, drug use or sale, bullying threats or intimidation, victimization, gang activity, or vandalism to school authorities and parents.
- ❑ Learn the consequences of gang involvement and alcohol, drug, and gun use and the methods for resisting alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Use this understanding to help other students avoid alcohol or drug use or seek help if they are already involved in alcohol or drugs.
- ❑ Follow the school code of conduct, understand that rules are made for everyone, and recognize the consequences of violating the rules.
- ❑ Whenever possible, travel with others to and from school and to special school events. Students must always be aware of their surroundings.
- ❑ Work with teachers, principals, and other students in developing a community service program, where students give back to the community in a positive manner.
- ❑ Encourage their parents to come to the school and be involved in activities that support the school.
- ❑ Serve as a big brother/big sister, tutor, or mentor for a younger student.

Action Steps for Parents

Parents play a key role in ensuring that their children are safe and drug-free. Without the active support and participation of parents, schools and communities cannot be safe. Parents have to be part of a school's effort to create an orderly, respectful environment. Some of the actions parents can take to assist schools are:

- ❑ Set standards of behavior, limits, and clear expectations for children both in and out of school and develop mutually agreed-upon rules about homework, extracurricular participation, grades, curfews, chaperoned parties, and places that are off limits.
- ❑ Teach standards of right and wrong and demonstrate these standards through example.
- ❑ Discuss with their children the school's discipline policies, reinforcing the belief that school rules support the rights of all students to attend schools with disciplined environments safe from influences of violence and alcohol or substance abuse.
- ❑ Encourage their children to talk about school, their social activities, their interests and problems, and even their walk to and from school.
- ❑ Be involved in their children's school life by reviewing homework, meeting their teachers, and attending school functions such as parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, class programs, open houses, plays, concerts, and sporting events.
- ❑ Build a network of other adults with whom they can talk about school safety issues and alcohol and drug use.
- ❑ Join a community association to ensure that issues related to alcohol, drugs, and violence are made part of the organization's agenda and that community groups work together to create a safe school corridor by supervising walking routes to and from school.
- ❑ Talk to their children about the consequences of drug and weapon use, gang participation, and violence and ensure that firearms that parents keep in the home or automobile are unloaded and inaccessible to children. Other dangerous weapons should also be kept out of the reach of children.
- ❑ Work with the school to develop a comprehensive Safe School Plan that incorporates a clearly articulated statement to students, parents, and the community regarding what will and will not be tolerated and that also provides a strong emphasis on programs to prevent violence and the use of alcohol and drugs.
- ❑ Monitor the programs their children watch, the video games they play, and the music they listen to regularly. Take time to explain to their children the actual nature and consequences of what is being said and done.
- ❑ Encourage their children to participate in school-sponsored, after-class activities to help limit the amount of time their children spend watching television.

Action Steps for Community and Business Groups

Making schools safe, orderly, and drug-free requires the support and cooperation of the entire community. Children spend a significant amount of their time in the community, and it is essential that community groups (including law enforcement and social services, juvenile justice agencies, foundations, and not-for-profit organizations) and businesses provide students with the assistance and support needed to live in a community and go to school without the fear or threat of violence. Some of the actions community and business groups can take to assist schools are:

- ❑ Participate on a school's Safe School Plan committee.
- ❑ Adopt and support a school.
- ❑ Sponsor extracurricular social and cultural activities, entrepreneurial opportunities, and other positive alternative activities for students.
- ❑ Work collaboratively with the schools in developing and sponsoring community projects for youth living in the community.
- ❑ Assist in creating safe corridors for students going to and from school.
- ❑ Adopt policies that permit and encourage employees to become active in youth-related activities, like tutoring, mentoring, or coaching.
- ❑ Encourage employees who are parents to visit their children's schools regularly without being penalized at work.
- ❑ Open businesses and corporate facilities for field trips, apprenticeships, and internships for students.
- ❑ Promote awareness of career and college opportunities and the availability of financial aid and nontraditional scholarships. Sponsor a scholarship program.
- ❑ Sponsor fundraising events for schools to support their safe schools initiatives, focusing on preventing violence and resisting alcohol and drug use.
- ❑ Become knowledgeable about the operation of schools in their community and participate in school reform efforts.

Information Briefs

Preventing Juvenile Gun Violence in Schools

Preventing Juvenile Gun Violence in Schools

Since the mid-1970's, homicides by juveniles involving a firearm have increased nearly threefold. In addition, during this same period, the number of juvenile arrests for weapons violations increased 117 percent. When guns are the weapon of choice, youth violence becomes deadly.[1]

In 1990, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveyed a nationally representative sample of 9th- and 12th-grade students about the number of times they had carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club during the prior 30 days. One in 20 students indicated he or she had carried a firearm, usually a handgun.[2] A number of other surveys confirm an increased propensity among young people to carry guns. [3-5]

In 1984, the United States saw a dramatic increase in juvenile gun homicide, coinciding with the introduction of crack cocaine into urban communities.[4] Studies show that as the use of guns by drug-involved youth increases, other young people obtain guns for their own protection. This cycle of fear or "diffusion" theory is supported by recent research on the "ecology of danger." [5] A 1993 Louis Harris poll showed that 35 percent of children ages 6 to 12 fear their lives will be cut short by gun violence, [6] and a longitudinal study of 1,500 Pittsburgh boys revealed that their frequency of carrying a concealed weapon increased when they began selling drugs. [7]

Promising Practices

To effectively address the rising levels of juvenile crime, especially youth gun violence, participants from all community sectors, public and private, are beginning to work collaboratively and comprehensively to reduce the incidence of violence in the schools. A number of approaches have been taken, can be supported, or should be initiated to address the increased access to and use of guns by young people. These practices are listed below as (1) prevention programs, (2) intervention programs, and (3) comprehensive initiatives.

Prevention Programs

The majority of youth gun violence prevention programs involve instruction carried out in schools, community-based organizations, and physicians' offices. They emphasize the prevention of weapon misuse, the risks involved with the possession of a firearm, and the need for conflict resolution and anger management skills. Educational programs often use videotapes to support their presentation of the tragic results of gun violence and may also include firearm safety instructions, public information campaigns, counseling programs, or crisis intervention hotlines. Key elements of a gun violence prevention program may include:

- ❑ Creating an interagency gun-free school committee.
- ❑ Standardizing antiweapon policies and procedures for an immediate response for gun-related incidents.
- ❑ Developing a Safe and Drug-Free School Plan with a crisis response team for gun-related incidents.

- ❑ Establishing an interdisciplinary review committee to examine gun-related incidents and determine offender outcomes in addition to expulsion (e.g., alternative school).

- ❑ Providing student assessment for alternative school placement and linking of services for student and family, if needed.

- ❑ Developing prerelease and transition strategies for returning the student to a mainstream school.

- ❑ Providing followup services to track the student's performance in the mainstream school.

- ❑ Developing methods for communicating the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act and corresponding school policies through school and community newsletters, Parent-Teacher and Parent-Student Associations, school resource officers, and other outlets.

- ❑ Developing and implementing a gun violence prevention curriculum.

- ❑ Establishing a student group against gun violence.

Some examples of prevention practices are:

Classroom Strategies. The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence has developed a school-based curriculum that has been used extensively across the country and has been evaluated by the Education Development Center with positive results. The Straight Talk About Risks (STAR) program at the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence is a comprehensive school-based program designed to reduce gun injuries and deaths with prevention activities for children and their families. Through STAR, students also learn how to make better, safer decisions and resolve conflicts without violence through role playing, goal setting, and the development of leadership skills.

Gun Buy-back Programs. Weapons Watch was organized by the mental health center of the Memphis School District, the Memphis Police Department, and Crime Stoppers. Weapons Watch was implemented to get children involved in ridding their schools of weapons. A hotline was established for students to call anonymously with information about a classmate who brings a weapon to school. Students are rewarded if the information leads to the confiscation of weapons and the arrest of the classmate who brings a weapon on campus.

Public Education Campaigns. Fresno's Youth Violence Prevention Network campaign in California is unique because it directly involves young people in delivering an anti-gun violence message. Previously known as Radio Bilingue, the Network is the result of a collaboration among Chicano Youth Center, House of Hope, Save Our Sons and Daughters, and End Barrio Warfare. Violence prevention activities include developing gun-free zone programs in city parks and neighborhoods, school emergency response and mediation teams, youth conferences, and youth leadership programs.

Intervention Programs

Police and sheriff's departments have been instrumental in supporting gun violence prevention/intervention programs. As part of drug education, public safety, and violence prevention efforts, police officers and sheriffs across the Nation have worked

collaboratively with schools to present critical information on gun violence to young people and, simultaneously, to develop more effective and interpersonal relations with young people.

Community Law Enforcement Programs. The Illinois State Police School Security Facilitator Program identifies jurisdictions with concerns about school violence. Representatives from all community programs that play a role in addressing problems of youth crime and violence are invited to attend an intensive 5-day team building and education program. Part of the curriculum deals directly with the interdiction of guns in schools. Teams return to their communities to educate others on youth violence issues and to implement specific strategies for violence reduction. While no short- or long-term evaluation of this program has been implemented, anecdotal information from prior participants indicates some degree of usefulness and success.

Gun Market Disruption and Interception. The Kansas City Weed and Seed program is a joint effort of the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Attorney, and the Kansas City, Kansas, police department. The program focuses police efforts in high-crime neighborhoods on traffic violations, curfew violations, and other infractions of the law. Despite the fact that previous police campaigns have drawn protests of discrimination, the gun intercept program in Kansas City has not. Police have involved community and religious leaders in initial planning, and neighborhoods have made requests for greater police activity.

Diversion and Treatment Programs. In Pima County, Arizona, the Juvenile Diversion Program has set up a firearms prevention course for youngsters who are not hard-core delinquents but who have been referred to juvenile court for firing or carrying a gun, and for young people at risk for being involved with guns. At least one parent is required to attend the monthly sessions. During the course, the assistant prosecutor informs the juveniles and their parents about gun laws. Parents are given instruction on safe gun storage. By agreeing to take the course, the youth do not have their cases adjudicated and are not placed on probation; however, they do acquire a juvenile record.

Gun Courts. A special type of court called a Gun Court has recently been established by Providence, Rhode Island, to focus on gun crimes. All gun crimes are referred to a single judge who processes cases on a fast track. Gun courts have cut the processing time of gun crime cases in half.

Alternative Schools. The Second Chance School in Topeka, Kansas, is a voluntary half-day instructional course for students who have been expelled for possession of weapons or assaulting a staff member. Students engage in studies of math, social sciences, and language skills, participate in some recreational activities, and are required to participate in community service. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, students attend the program for 1 semester or 1 year. To date, 90 percent of the students enrolled have successfully completed the program. The program has been operating for 3 years and has developed partnerships with the juvenile courts, the public schools, the police department, and the recreational department.

Comprehensive Initiatives

In Atlanta, the Center for Injury Control at Emory University is working together with

the community, State and local governments, and with Project Pulling America's Cities Together (PACT) to analyze the magnitude, extent, and characteristics of youth firearms violence and to develop a broad-based strategy for addressing the problem. The planned intervention includes a three-part strategy: (1) to reduce the demand for firearms through a comprehensive community education program; (2) to reduce supply by promoting safe storage of firearms and by increasing law enforcement efforts to interdict the illegal gun market; and (3) to provide aggressive rehabilitation to decrease recidivism among juvenile gun offenders.

In Dade County, Florida, the Youth Crime Watch program, mandated for all schools by the Miami school board, was created in 1984 to extend the neighborhood watch concept to schools. The Gun Safety Awareness Program, a districtwide effort, began in November 1988. In addition to this comprehensive curriculum, the school board declares a week in November as Gun Safety Awareness Week. The Gun Safety Awareness Program targets kindergarten through 12th grade students and their parents, examining causes of handgun violence and teaching the consequences of being arrested. The curriculum is supplemented by area Youth Crime Watches, school resource officers, and police officers. Parents attend training workshops on handgun safety awareness. Metal detectors are used unannounced at selected schools, and students caught with guns are referred to juvenile or adult court and recommended for expulsion and assignment to an alternative school. Awareness levels among youth and parents about the need to prevent handgun violence have increased in Dade County as a result of this comprehensive program.

State Legislation

In May 1995, the State of Texas enacted legislation that would both remove students who bring guns to school and who commit other serious offenses from their regular school and provide a safety net for those youth so they are not on the streets. Each school, in cooperation with the juvenile board of each county, must adopt a student code of conduct and provide an alternative education program. When a student is expelled, the school must notify juvenile court. Juvenile boards and schools establish what support services are to be given to these expelled youth. In counties where the population exceeds 125,000, the juvenile board must offer a juvenile justice alternative education program. School districts and local juvenile boards meet regularly to coordinate efforts. For more information, contact the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission at 512-912-2404.

Federal Legislation

In August 1994, the Youth Handgun Safety Act (Title XI, Subtitle B) (P.L. 103-322) was passed as part of the Omnibus Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. It prohibits the possession, sale, or transfer of a handgun or ammunition to a juvenile. The law includes a number of exceptions, such as farming, hunting, and other specified uses. The Gun-Free Schools Act (P.L. 103-382) (GFSA), enacted in October 1994, requires that local educational agencies implement a policy "requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a firearm or weapon to a school served by such agency." Under the Gun-Free Schools Act, each State receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA) must have a law requiring expulsion from school, for a period of not less than 1 year, of any student who brings a firearm to school. The local chief administering officer may modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Even though reducing youth gun violence is a Federal priority, the primary responsibility is on the State and local level. The Federal role must be to encourage and assist communities by providing support based on sound information gathered nationally on effective approaches to intervention and prevention.

Frequently Asked Questions

What entities are affected by the provisions of the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA)?

Each State, as well as its State educational agency and local educational agencies, has responsibilities under the GFSA.

Are private schools subject to the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act?

Private schools are not subject to the provisions of the GFSA, but private school students who participate in Local Educational Agency (LEA) programs or activities are subject to the 1-year expulsion requirement to the extent that such students are under the supervision and control of the LEA as part of their participation in the LEA's programs. For example, a private school student who is enrolled in a Federal program, such as Title I, is subject to a 1-year expulsion, but only from Federal program participation, not a 1-year expulsion from the private school. Of course, nothing prohibits a private school from imposing a similar expulsion from the private school on a student who brings a weapon to school.

Does the Gun-Free Schools Act's 1-year expulsion requirement preclude any due process proceedings?

No. Students facing expulsion from school are entitled under the U.S. Constitution and most State constitutions to the due process protection of notice and an opportunity to be heard. If, after due process has been accorded, a student is found to have brought a weapon to school, the GFSA requires an expulsion of not less than 1 year (subject to the case-by-case exception discussed below).

What does the Gun-Free Schools Act require of States?

The GFSA requires that each State receiving Federal funds under the ESEA must, by October 20, 1995, (1) have in effect a State law requiring LEA's to expel from school for not less than 1 year a student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school; (2) have in effect a State law allowing the LEA's chief administering officer to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis; and (3) report to the Secretary on an annual basis concerning information submitted by LEA's to State Educational Agencies (SEAs). SEA's must also ensure that no ESEA funds are made available to an LEA that does not have a referral policy consistent with Section 14602.

1-year Expulsion Requirement
Each State's law must require LEA's to comply with a 1-year expulsion requirement; that is, subject to the exception discussed below, any student who brings a weapon to

school must be expelled for not less than 1 year.

Case-by-Case Exception
Each State's law must allow the chief administering officer of an LEA to modify the 1-year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Annual Reporting
Each State must report annually on LEA compliance with the 1-year expulsion requirement and on expulsions imposed under the State law, including the number of students expelled in each LEA and the types of weapons involved.

What does the Gun-Free Schools Act require of LEA's?

The GFSA requires that LEA's (1) comply with the State law requiring the 1-year expulsion; (2) provide an assurance of compliance to the SEA; (3) provide descriptive information to the SEA concerning the LEA's expulsions; and (4) adopt a referral policy for students who bring weapons to school.

1-year Expulsion Requirement
LEA's must comply with the State law requiring a 1-year expulsion; that is, subject to the case-by-case exception, any student who brings a weapon to school must be expelled for not less than 1 year.

LEA Assurance
An LEA must include in its application to the State educational agency for ESEA assistance an assurance that the LEA is in compliance with the State law requiring the 1-year expulsion.

Descriptive Report to SEA
An LEA must include in its application for ESEA assistance a description of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under the 1-year expulsion requirement, including:
(1) Name of the school concerned.
(2) Number of students expelled from the school.
(3) Type of weapons concerned.

Referral Policy
LEA's must also implement a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a weapon to school.

When must an LEA implement its referral policy?

LEA's must take immediate action to implement a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a weapon to school. The GFSA directs that no ESEA funds shall be made available to an LEA unless that LEA has the required referral policy.

When must an LEA submit the required assurance?

In its first application to the State educational agency for ESEA funds after the date that the State enacts and makes effective the required 1-year expulsion legislation, the LEA must include an assurance that the LEA is in compliance with the State law.

What is the role of the SEA in determining whether an LEA is in compliance with the Gun-Free Schools Act?

The GFSA requires States to report to the Secretary on an annual basis concerning LEA compliance. Therefore, before awarding any ESEA funds to an LEA, the

SEA must ensure that the LEA has (1) implemented a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a weapon to school; and (2) included in its application for ESEA funds the assurance and other information required by the GFSA. SEA's must ensure that the LEA application contains:
(1) An assurance that the LEA is in compliance with the State law requiring the 1-year expulsion; and (2) A description of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under the 1-year expulsion requirement, including:
(A) the name of the school concerned.
(B) the number of students expelled from the school.
(C) the type of weapons concerned.

Who is an LEA's "chief administering officer"?

The term "chief administering officer" is not defined by the GFSA. Each LEA should determine, using its own legal framework, which chief operating officer or authority (e.g., Superintendent, Board, etc.) has the power to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Can any individual or entity other than the LEA's "chief administering officer" modify the 1-year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis?

No. However, the chief administering officer may allow another individual or entity to carry out preliminary information gathering functions, and prepare a recommendation for the chief administering officer.

Is it permissible for an LEA to use the case-by-case exception to avoid compliance with the 1-year expulsion requirement?

No, this exception may not be used to avoid overall compliance with the 1-year expulsion requirement.

How is the term "weapon" defined?

For the purposes of the GFSA, a "weapon" means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code. According to Section 921, the following are included within the definition:

- Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.
- The frame or receiver of any weapon described above.
- Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer.
- Any destructive device, which includes:

(a) Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas—

(1) Bomb,
(2) Grenade,
(3) Rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces,
(4) Missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce,
(5) Mine, or
(6) similar device.

(b) Any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter.

(c) Any combination or parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

According to Section 921, antique firearms are not included in the definition. In addition, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms advises that Class-C common fireworks are not included in the definition of "weapon." For additional information about whether a particular weapon is a "firearm" under this definition, contact the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program at 202-260-3954 for referral to the nearest Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms field office.

Does the Gun-Free Schools Act preclude classes such as hunting or military education, or activities such as before- or afterschool hunting, or rifle clubs, which may involve the handling or use of weapons?

No. Although individual school districts may choose to prohibit firearms altogether, the Secretary does not believe that Congress intended the GFSA to preclude, in all circumstances, school-sponsored or authorized classes and activities that might involve the handling or use of firearms by students. The Secretary interprets the GFSA to allow local school districts to permit firearms at school when students are participating in school-sponsored or authorized activities that involve firearms. Similarly, based on the legislative history, the Secretary interprets the GFSA not to forbid school districts from allowing firearms at school when students intend to use firearms solely for before- or afterschool hunting purposes, providing the school district's determination to permit firearms is made and disseminated in advance, as part of LEA policy, and is consistent with the intent and purposes of the GFSA to prevent violence and create an environment conducive to learning. For example, if a local school district approves an extracurricular program such as a rifle club or allows students to bring firearms solely for before- or afterschool hunting, the activities would not violate the GFSA if the school district:

- ❑ Determines that the activity is consistent with the intent and purposes of the GFSA.

- ❑ Provides notice as part of its Gun-Free Schools policy that the activities are approved and authorized.

If any firearms are to be allowed for these limited purposes, local school districts are cautioned to consider all applicable Federal, State, and local laws pertaining to the possession of firearms. In particular, school districts should be aware that Federal and some State laws prohibiting juveniles from possessing handguns may be applicable. The Secretary also encourages school districts that permit students to bring firearms to school for these limited purposes to adopt appropriate safeguards to ensure student safety, consistent with the purposes of the GFSA.

Are knives considered weapons under the Gun-Free Schools Act?

No, for the purposes of the GFSA, the definition of weapon does not include knives. State legislation, an SEA, or an LEA may, however, decide to broaden its own definition of weapon to include knives.

What is meant by the term "expulsion"?

The term "expulsion" is not defined by the GFSA; however, at a minimum, expulsion means removal from the student's regular program. Expulsion does not mean merely moving a student from a regular program in one school to a regular program in another school. Care should be taken by local officials to ensure that a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school is effectively removed from that setting.

Is a State, SEA, or LEA required to provide alternative educational services to students who have been expelled for bringing a weapon to school?

The GFSA neither requires nor prohibits the provision of alternative educational services to students who have been expelled. Other Federal, State, or local laws may, however, require that students receive alternative educational services in certain circumstances.

What is an "alternative setting" for the provision of educational services to an expelled student?

An alternative setting is one that is clearly distinguishable from the student's regular school placement.

Is Federal funding available to provide alternative educational services?

Yes, formula grants awarded under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act may be used for alternative educational services. In addition, other Federal funds may be available for alternative educational services, consistent with each program's statutory and regulatory requirements.

Do the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act conflict with requirements that apply to students with disabilities?

No. Compliance with the GFSA may be achieved consistently with the requirements that apply to students with disabilities, so long as discipline of such students is determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504. The Department intends to issue separate, more detailed guidance on discipline of students with disabilities, which will include clarification of the implementation of the GFSA consistent with IDEA and Section 504.

Is it permissible to expel a student for a "school year" rather than a year?

No. The statute explicitly states that expulsion shall be for a period of not less than 1 year.

Does the expulsion requirement apply only to violations occurring in the school building?

No. The 1-year expulsion requirement applies to students who bring weapons to any setting that is under the control and supervision of the LEA.

Research and Evaluation

While there are few conclusive evaluations of youth gun violence prevention programs, because so many are new, a growing body of research identifies the circumstances surrounding the incidence of youth gun violence, providing guidance for prevention and intervention programs.

Effective programs should address young people's access to, carrying of, and use of guns. Research suggests that targeting the

source of guns and drug dealing, increasing young people's faith in law enforcement and school administrators, teaching conflict resolution skills, and encouraging youth to develop positive attitudes about themselves and their peers may assist in creating a safer, violence-free school environment.

Resources

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20202-6123
202-260-3954.

The U.S. Department of Justice is engaged in a number of efforts to address the problem of youth gun violence, from grant programs to support linkages between community-based youth gun violence reduction strategies and law enforcement strategies; from drafting a model juvenile handgun law for adoption by States and U.S. territories to disseminating documents on youth gun research, programs, organizations, and program implementation. For more information about these activities, contact the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) at 202-307-5911. For a copy of OJJDP's *Reducing Youth Gun Violence: A Summary of Programs and Initiatives,* contact the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC) at 800-638-5726. On August 9, 1996, OJJDP sponsored a satellite teleconference to assist communities in developing strategies to reduce youth gun violence. The broadcast described promising approaches to youth gun violence prevention and intervention. For a videotape copy of this program entitled *Reducing Youth Gun Violence,* contact JJC.

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Searches for Weapons and Drugs

Searches for Weapons and Drugs

If public schools experience high levels of violence and drug use, school officials may wish to consider adopting search policies that permit them under certain circumstances to screen students and search school property for weapons and drugs.

Compliance With Basic Dictates of the Fourth Amendment

Public school officials, like law enforcement officers, are State officers bound by the Fourth Amendment. Thus, school officials must understand the basic dictates of the Fourth Amendment—both to comport themselves within the bounds of the law and to implement an effective drug and weapons search policy. What follows is a general discussion on this important topic.

Contact an attorney before implementing a search policy.

The information contained in this section is meant to give school officials some basis for considering whether to pursue a search policy in their schools or school districts. Before implementing a search policy, schools should be sure to contact either the school attorney, the local district attorney, or the State attorney general.

School officials do not need a warrant or probable cause prior to conducting a search.

The Fourth Amendment prohibits all unreasonable searches and seizures by State officers. Reasonableness is determined by balancing the governmental interest behind the search against the privacy intrusion of the search. The Supreme Court has held that students have a legitimate expectation of privacy in their persons and accompanying possessions. However, the Court also has held that schools have a substantial interest in maintaining security and order in the classroom and on school grounds. The Court has determined that this interest justifies a more flexible standard of reasonableness for searches of students that are conducted by school officials as opposed to law enforcement officers. Thus, the Court has held that school officials, unlike the police, do not need to obtain a warrant prior to conducting a search. Nor do they need probable cause to believe that a violation of the law has occurred.

In order to conduct a search, school officials need only a "reasonable suspicion" that the search will turn up evidence that the student broke the law or the rules of the school.

School officials need only have "reasonable suspicion" that a particular search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Even if reasonable suspicion exists, to be permissible, the scope of the search must be such that the measures used are reasonably related to the purpose of the search, and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student and the nature of the suspected infraction. The Supreme Court has upheld searches that comply with this standard only insofar as such searches are initiated and conducted by school officials. A more stringent legal standard likely applies to searches conducted in conjunction with or at the behest of law enforcement officers.

The meaning of "reasonable suspicion."

In interpreting and applying the "reasonable suspicion" standard set forth by the Supreme Court, lower courts generally have required more than general suspicion, curiosity, rumor, or a hunch to justify searches of students and their possessions. Factors identified by courts in sustaining a search of a student include the observation of specific and describable behavior leading one reasonably to believe that a particular student is engaging in or has engaged in prohibited conduct. The more specific the evidence in support of searching an individual student, the more likely the search will be upheld. For example, courts using the reasonable suspicion standard have upheld the right of school officials to search the following:

- A student's purse, after a teacher saw her smoking in a restroom and the student denied having smoked or being a smoker.

- A student's purse, after several other students said she had been distributing firecrackers.

- A student's pockets, based on a phone tip about drugs from an anonymous source believed to have previously provided accurate information.

School officials may search students only within reasonable limits.

When reasonable suspicion exists, school officials may search students, but only within reasonable limits. Such limits require school officials to adopt measures that are reasonably related to the purpose behind the search. In addition, the search may not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the particular student and the nature of the infraction. For example, if a teacher thinks he or she has seen a student pass a marijuana cigarette to a second student, the teacher might reasonably search the two students and any nearby belongings in which the students may have tried to conceal the drug. If, however, the teacher discovers that what was actually observed was only a stick of gum or other noncontraband item, the teacher would be unjustified in searching either the students or their belongings any further.

As a general rule, the more intrusive the search, the greater the justification the courts will require. Thus, a search of a student's jacket or bookbag requires less suspicion than a physical pat-down or, at the extreme, a strip search. Courts consider strip searches to be highly intrusive of an individual student's privacy; thus, they should be premised only on probable cause.

A search does not have to end because the school official found the item that is sought.

In addition, school officials do not have to end a search simply because they uncover what they suspected would be found. Instead, if a search of a student reveals items that provide reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student might also possess other evidence of crimes or misconduct, the school officials may continue the search. For example, if a teacher justifiably searches a student's purse for cigarettes and finds rolling papers such as those used for marijuana cigarettes, it will be reasonable for the teacher to continue the search for further evidence of drugs.

School officials may search school property when they have "reasonable suspicion" that the search will turn up evidence that the student broke the law or the rules of the school.

The Supreme Court has not decided whether, and to what extent, students have legitimate expectations of privacy in school property such as lockers, desks, or other areas provided for the storage of school supplies and/or personal belongings. At a minimum, school officials may search all such areas when they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that such a search will reveal evidence of illegal activity or a violation of school regulations, as set forth above. Whether school officials may conduct suspicionless searches, however, will be determined by the nature of the specific privacy expectations students have in a particular area.

For example, a student's locker often serves as the repository for all school supplies and personal belongings that the student is required, or chooses, to bring to school. Indeed, at least one court has described the school locker as a student's "home away from home." Thus, when school officials permit a student exclusive, secured use of a locker to store his or her books and belongings throughout the school year, such student arguably has a legitimate expectation of privacy in the locker's contents.

On the other hand, students likely have a lesser expectation of privacy in the contents of classroom desks, at least to the extent these desks are unsecured and available for use by other students throughout the school day. When a school does permit its students to store and secure the contents of a desk such that others cannot gain access (in a homeroom, for example), a similar expectation of privacy as that retained by students in their lockers probably would attach.

Courts are more likely to uphold searches of school property when students have a reduced expectation of privacy.

Courts are more likely to uphold searches conducted by school officials of lockers, secured desks, and other areas in which students store personal effects when certain steps are taken to reduce the reasonable expectation of privacy students may have in these areas. First, at the start of each academic year, school administrators can provide students with a written statement that details the school's policy of conducting random, unannounced searches throughout the year of student lockers, desks, and any other targeted areas within the school. The statement should inform students that they are to consider all such areas to be "public," not "private."

Moreover, the nonprivate nature of areas such as lockers and desks should be made obvious to the students. Thus, courts have upheld locker searches when the school retains joint control over the student lockers, maintains duplicate or master keys for all lockers, and reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Other possibilities might include providing students with lockers that have transparent or grid doors that enable passersby to observe the contents therein or providing students with secured lockers only when the students consent to joint custody with the school.

When a policy of inspecting lockers or other school property is adopted, school officials should in fact implement it. Otherwise, the practice of not searching could negate the

effect of the written policy by raising the expectation of privacy that students have in such areas.

Although these practices remain largely untested by the courts, locker and desk searches in schools will be easier to justify when the students' reasonable expectation of privacy is effectively reduced.

School officials may search student vehicles when they have "reasonable suspicion" that the search will turn up evidence that the student broke the law or the rules of the school.

School officials may search a student's vehicle that is left in a school parking lot when they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will disclose evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, as set forth above.

School officials may conduct random vehicle searches or keep students' car keys when the school has a very serious weapon or drug problem.

Under certain limited circumstances, school officials also may be able to conduct random, suspicionless weapon and/or drug searches of student vehicles parked on school grounds. When it is justifiable, all students who park their vehicles on school property therefore could be required to leave the ignition keys with school officials in the morning and then retrieve them before leaving at the end of the school day. Or, such students simply may be required to agree to provide school officials with access to their vehicles on demand.

To justify such a policy, a school will have to demonstrate that it has a very serious weapon and/or drug problem and that conducting these searches is a reasonably effective means of combatting that problem. For example, the school may have to show either that (1) students have access to their vehicles during the school day and thus are able to bring weapons and/or drugs from their vehicles into the schools or (2) weapons and/or drugs are used or exchanged within the immediate area of the parking lot. Moreover, the searches as conducted must be only as intrusive as necessary to further the interests at stake. For example, if a school official is searching for a firearm, it would not be reasonable to examine the ashtray.

Vehicle searches must be conducted in a manner that curtails undue discretion.

The vehicle searches must be conducted in a manner that curtails undue discretion on the part of school officials in deciding which vehicles to search. Suspicionless vehicle searches must be done uniformly or by systematically random selection, such as every third car. The courts have held that when the decision to search is left entirely to the discretion of the official, the searches may stigmatize or embarrass the isolated students searched, tending to make the search relatively more intrusive.

Schools must adequately inform all students that their vehicles are subject to search.

In addition, the school must adequately inform all students who use the lot that their vehicles are subject to search. This notice should inform the students of the grounds for the search, the extent of the search, and the frequency or regularity of the searches. This notice must be consistent with the school's actual vehicle search practice. For

example, if school officials inform students who use the school parking lot that their vehicles will be subject to a search once a month, but in fact do not conduct such searches until 6 months have elapsed, students may be justified in arguing that their expectation of privacy in the security of their vehicle was not adequately reduced by the practice followed by the school, regardless of the specific terms of the initial notice.

A search is permissible if the student consents.

If a student consents to a search, the search is permissible, regardless of whether there otherwise would be reasonable grounds for the search. However, school officials should be extremely cautious in basing a search on a student's consent.

Consent must be given knowingly and voluntarily.

For a search based on a student's consent to be valid, such consent must be given knowingly and voluntarily. Establishing whether a student's consent was voluntary can be difficult and the burden remains with the school official to so prove. If a student agrees to be searched out of fear or as a result of other coercion, that consent will probably be found invalid. Similarly, if school officials indicate that a student must agree to a search, or if the student is very young or otherwise unaware that he or she has the right to object, the student's consent also will be held invalid. For example, a policy that permits vehicle searches will not be permissible in schools at which students have no choice other than to drive—for example, because of a lack of public transportation or the unavailability of school busing—and no viable parking options other than the school lot. In such cases, courts probably will find that any consent obtained is coerced and thus invalid. To enhance the voluntariness of a student's consent, school officials are advised to explain to students that they do not have to consent to a search. In some cases, consent forms may be useful.

If a student refuses to consent to a search, school officials still may conduct the search as long as there are reasonable grounds to justify it, as set forth above.

Alternative search techniques

Schools with severe drug or weapons problems may wish to consider special types of search techniques to screen students for drugs or weapons. Although the Supreme Court has not addressed the constitutionality of the use of these devices in the context of public schools, the case law has evolved in the lower courts as follows:

Trained narcotics dogs to sniff objects may be used at any time and without any particular suspicion by the school official.

The courts have generally agreed that the use of trained narcotics dogs to sniff objects, as opposed to people, is not a search within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment and thus requires no level of suspicion. School officials therefore may use trained narcotics dogs to sniff objects that are not affixed to, or carried by, an individual student, such as lockers, desks, student vehicles parked in school parking lots, or any articles of personal property that have been discarded or abandoned. If the dog alerts them to a particular locker or vehicle, school officials then will have satisfied the reasonable suspicion requirement that justifies a more

thorough search to determine whether in fact drugs are present.

The use of dog sniffs on individual students in the absence of reasonable suspicion is more problematic. Of the few courts to consider the issue, the majority have concluded that the use of dog sniffs on students is a search and therefore may not be justified in the absence of reasonable suspicion.

When justified, schools may use metal detectors to search students and their personal effects.

Under certain circumstances, schools may be able to use magnetometers, or metal detectors, to search students and their personal effects for weapons prior to entering school premises. These devices could be either walk-through or hand-held. Although Federal courts have not yet addressed the constitutionality of such devices as used in public schools, the courts have upheld such use in the context of airports and courthouses. The courts have so concluded in light of the vital governmental interest in preventing air hijackings and safeguarding courthouses and of the relatively minimal intrusiveness of the magnetometer search.

Courts are likely to uphold the use of magnetometers in public schools subject to certain restrictions. First, school officials must be able to document a very serious problem with the possession of illegal weapons and the threat of related violence on school grounds. Second, school officials must use the device in a random fashion; they may not exercise any discretion in deciding whom to search. Thus, school officials may search every student who enters the building, or some other neutral category of persons, such as every third student. The courts have held that such random use of a magnetometer limits the stigma that attaches to those searched and minimizes the risk of abuse by the searching officials. Finally, the routine use of a magnetometer is justifiable only to the extent school officials are searching for weapons. However, other contraband uncovered in plain view or by plain touch during a magnetometer search may be seized by school officials. Subject to these restrictions, students may be required to submit to such a detection device daily or intermittently throughout the academic year.

Drug Testing Student Athletes

Drug Testing Student Athletes

If a public school has a drug problem in which its athletes play a significant part and school officials have attempted other, less intrusive drug prevention methods, the school may wish to consider adopting a policy of random drug testing of student athletes.

Promising Practices

The use of drug tests to screen students for drug use is a relatively new phenomenon in the school setting, and the law is still evolving. The Supreme Court in June 1995 upheld a policy of the Vernonia, Oregon, school district that requires all students who wish to participate in the school's athletic program to submit to periodic, random drug testing. The Vernonia policy was effective: teachers noted a decrease in drug use and an improvement in discipline.

In the fall of 1989, after undertaking previous prevention efforts that proved ineffective in stopping the district's sharp increase in drug use, the policy of random drug testing was adopted, along with very detailed procedures to ensure the accuracy of the testing, while minimizing its relative intrusiveness. Under the Vernonia policy, all students in the district who wish to participate in interscholastic athletics are required to sign a form consenting to be drug tested and must obtain the written consent of their parents. Athletes are tested at the beginning of their athletic season; once each week thereafter, 10 percent of all athletes are randomly selected from a pool for an additional drug test. A student, with the supervision of two adults, blindly draws the names of the 10 percent to be tested. Those chosen are notified and tested that same day, if possible.

Prior to the testing, each student must complete a specimen control form that bears an assigned number. The student must identify and verify any prescription medications they are taking. Students produce the samples under conditions very similar to those encountered in a public restroom. The student enters an empty locker room with an adult monitor of the same sex. Each male student produces a sample at a urinal, remaining fully clothed with his back to the monitor, who stands approximately twelve to fifteen feet behind the student. The monitor may or may not directly observe the student while he produces the sample. Female students produce samples in an enclosed bathroom stall and thus are not subject to direct observation. For both male and female students, monitors listen for normal sounds of urination. After the sample is produced, the student gives it to the monitor, who checks it for temperature and tampering and then transfers it to a vial.

The samples are then sent to an independent laboratory, which routinely and anonymously tests them for amphetamines, cocaine, and marijuana. The laboratory also may screen for other drugs, such as LSD, at the request of the district, but the identity of the student whose sample is being tested does not determine which drugs will be tested. The laboratory has a 99.94 percent rate of accuracy, and the district adheres to strict chain of custody procedures. Upon completion of its analysis, the laboratory is authorized to mail written test reports only

to the superintendent and to provide test results to district personnel by telephone only after the requesting official recites a code confirming his or her authority. Only the superintendent, principals, vice principals, and athletic directors have access to the test results, and the results are not kept for more than 1 year. Under no circumstances are the results of a drug test turned over to law enforcement officers.

If a student tests positive, he or she is subject only to either suspension from the athletic team or participation in an assistance program. Specifically, if a test result is positive, a second test is conducted as soon as possible to confirm the result. If the second sample tests negative, no further action is taken. If the second sample tests positive, the student's parents are notified, and the principal meets with the student and the parents. At this meeting, the student is presented with the option of (1) participating for 6 weeks in an assistance program that includes weekly urinalysis or (2) being suspended from athletics for the remainder of the current season and the next athletic season. The student is then retested before the start of the next athletic season for which he or she is eligible. A second violation results in automatic imposition of option (2); a third offense results in suspension for the rest of the current season and the next two athletic seasons.

Legal Issues

Drug testing of a student by a public school official is a search that must comply with the requirements of the Fourth Amendment. The Fourth Amendment prohibits all unreasonable searches and seizures by State officers. Reasonableness is determined by balancing the governmental interest behind the search against the privacy intrusion of the search. In upholding the drug testing policy in *Veronia*, the Supreme Court balanced the school's interest in conducting the drug test against the privacy interest upon which the test intrudes. The Court recognized the "government's responsibilities, under a public school system, as guardian and tutor of children entrusted to its care." The Court noted that deterring drug use by the Nation's schoolchildren, in general, is "important, perhaps compelling." It further noted the substantial physical risks posed by student athlete drug use, where the risk of immediate physical harm to the drug user or teammates is particularly high. The Court underscored the severity of the drug problem that existed within the school district whose policy was at issue and the fact that athletes were an active part of the school's drug-using population. Thus, the Court observed that the drug problem was largely fueled by the "role model" effect of athletes' drug use.

Against this governmental interest, the Court balanced the privacy intrusion endured by student athletes who are drug tested. The Court acknowledged that urinalysis drug tests are searches within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment that intrude upon a significant privacy interest. However, the Court held that athletes, unlike other members of the student population, have reduced expectations of privacy due to the "element of communal undress" inherent in athletic participation. Moreover, student athletes voluntarily subject themselves to preseason physical examinations and a higher degree of regulation than other students through compliance with codes of conduct, dress, and maintenance of minimum grade point averages. Finally, the Court noted the importance of the strict chain of custody

procedures and restricted access to test results to which the district adhered.

The unique, reduced expectation of privacy of student athletes and the heightened risk posed by student athlete drug use—which is not at issue with students who are not engaged in rigorous, school-supported physical activity—provided the basis for the Court's decision upholding the school's drug testing policy. Since the *Vernonia* decision, courts have not addressed the constitutionality of a drug testing program that targets students other than athletes. Moreover, in upholding the random drug testing of athletes, the Supreme Court stated in fairly strong terms that any school policy that identifies students for testing in other than a random fashion, thus allowing school officials to exercise any amount of discretion, would be met with disapproval.

Truancy

Truancy

The Problem of Truancy in America's Communities

Truancy is the first sign of trouble, the first indicator that a young person is giving up and losing his or her way. When young people start skipping school, they are telling their parents, school officials, and the community at large that they are in trouble and need help if they are to keep moving forward in life.

Research data indicate that students who become truant and eventually drop out of school put themselves at a long-term disadvantage for becoming productive citizens. High school dropouts, for example, are 2 1/2 times more likely to be on welfare than high school graduates. In 1995, high school dropouts were almost twice as likely to be unemployed as high school graduates. In addition, high school dropouts who are employed earn much lower salaries. Students who become truant and eventually drop out of high school too often set themselves up for a life of struggle.

Truancy is a gateway to crime. High rates of truancy are linked to high daytime burglary rates and high vandalism. According to the Los Angeles County Office of Education, truancy is the most powerful predictor of juvenile delinquent behavior. "I've never seen a gang member who wasn't a truant first," says California District Attorney Kim Menninger. Truancy prevention efforts should be a part of any community policing effort to prevent crime before it happens.

- During a recent sample period in Miami, more than 71 percent of 13- to 16-year-olds prosecuted for criminal violations had been truant.

- In Minneapolis, daytime crime dropped 68 percent after police began citing truant students.

- In San Diego, 44 percent of violent juvenile crime occurs between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

While no national data on the extent of truancy exist, in some cities unexcused absences can number in the thousands each day. In Pittsburgh, for example, each day approximately 3,500 students or 12 percent of the pupil population is absent and about 70 percent of these absences are unexcused. In Philadelphia, approximately 2,500 students a day are absent without an excuse. In Milwaukee, on any given school day, there are approximately 4,000 unexcused absences.

Combating truancy is one of the first ways that a community can reach out quickly to a disaffected young person and help families that may be struggling with a rebellious teenager. This chapter seeks to offer parents, school officials, law enforcement agencies, and communities a set of principles to design their own strategies to combat truancy and describes successful models of antitruancy initiatives that are working in communities across the Nation.

Users' Guide to Deterring Truancy

Each school and each community needs to decide what steps to take to reduce truancy. These decisions should be made

with the active involvement of parents, educators, law enforcement personnel, juvenile and family court judges, and representatives from social service, community, and religious organizations.

The communities that have had the most success in deterring truancy not only have focused on improving procedures—such as those that accurately track student attendance—but have also implemented a comprehensive strategy that focuses on incentives and sanctions for truants and their parents. Below are five primary elements of a comprehensive community and educational strategy to combat truancy.

1. *Involve parents in all truancy prevention activities.*

Parents play the fundamental role in the education of their children. This applies to every family regardless of the parents' station in life, their income, or their educational background. Nobody else commands greater influence in getting a young person to go to school every day and to recognize how a good education can define his or her future.

For families and schools to work together to solve problems like truancy, there must be mutual trust and communication. Many truancy programs contain components that provide intensive monitoring, counseling, and other family-strengthening services to truants and their families. Schools can help by being "family-friendly" and encouraging teachers and parents to make regular contact before problems arise. Schools may want to consider arranging convenient times and neutral settings for parent meetings, starting homework hotlines, training teachers to work with parents, hiring or appointing a parent liaison, and giving parents a voice in school decisions.

2. *Ensure that students face firm sanctions for truancy.*

School districts should communicate to their students that they have zero tolerance for truancy. State legislatures have found that linking truancy to such items as a student's grades or driver's license can help reduce the problem. Connecticut, Delaware, and several other States have curfews during daytime school hours that allow law enforcement officers to question youth to determine if their absence is legitimate. In a few States, including New York, a student with a certain number of unexcused absences can be failed in his or her courses. A Wisconsin judge may, among other options, order a truant to attend counseling or an education program designed for him or her.

3. *Create meaningful incentives for parental responsibility.*

It is critical that parents of truant children assume responsibility for truant behavior. Each community must determine the best way to create meaningful incentives for such parents to ensure that their children go to school. In some States, parents of truant children are asked to participate in parenting education programs. Some other States, such as Maryland and Oklahoma, have determined that parents who fail to prevent truancy can be subject to formal sanction or lose eligibility for certain public assistance. Communities can also provide positive incentives for responsible parents who ensure their child's regular school attendance. Such incentives can include increased eligibility to participate in publicly funded programs. Working together, local officials, educators, and parents can make a shared commitment to assume responsibility for reducing truancy—and can choose the incentives that make the most sense for their community.

4. *Establish ongoing truancy prevention programs in school.*

Truancy can be caused by or related to such factors as student drug use, violence at or near school, association with truant friends, lack of family support for regular school attendance, emotional or mental health problems, lack of a clear path to more education or work, or inability to keep pace with academic requirements. Schools should address the unique needs of each child and consider developing initiatives to combat the root causes of truancy, including tutoring programs, added security measures, drug prevention initiatives, mentorship efforts through community and religious groups, campaigns for involving parents in their children's school attendance, and referrals to social service agencies.

Schools should also find new ways to engage their students in learning, including such hands-on options as career academies, school-to-work opportunities, and community service. They should enlist the support of local business and community leaders to determine the best way to prevent and reduce truancy. For example, business and community leaders may lend support by volunteering space to house temporary detention centers, establishing community service projects that lead to afterschool or weekend jobs, or developing software to track truants.

5. *Involve local law enforcement in truancy reduction efforts.*

In order to enforce school attendance policies, school officials should establish close linkages with local police, probation officers, and juvenile and family court officials. Police departments report favorably on community-run temporary detention centers where they can drop off truant youth rather than bring them to local police stations for time-consuming processing. Police sweeps of neighborhoods in which truant youth are often found can prove dramatically effective when they are part of a comprehensive antitruancy initiative.

Model Truancy Reduction Initiatives

Each community needs to determine how it will reduce and deter truancy. Below are descriptions of truancy programs in communities around the country that employ some or all of the elements described above.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Program elements: Parents, police, and the school system focus on the causes of truancy in the Truancy Abatement and Burglary Suppression (TABS) initiative in Milwaukee. Attendance is taken every period in all high schools. Local police officers pick up truant students and bring them to a Boys and Girls Club for counseling. Parents are called at home automatically every night if their child did not attend school that day. If the parent is not supportive of regular school attendance, the district attorney is contacted.

Results: In a recent sample of students who went through the TABS process, 73 percent returned to school the next day, 66 percent remained in school on the 15th day, and 64 percent still are in school 30 days later. Since the TABS initiative began, daytime burglary in Milwaukee has decreased 33 percent, and daytime aggravated battery has decreased 29 percent. Aquine Jackson, director of the Parent and Student Services Division of the Milwaukee Public Schools, said: "I think the TABS program is so effective because it is a collaboration among...the Milwaukee Public Schools, the

Milwaukee Boys and Girls Clubs, the Milwaukee Police Department, and the County Sheriff, and because it is now a part of State statute that police officers can stop students on the street during school hours."

Rohnert Park, California

Program elements: The Stop, Cite, and Return Program is designed to reduce truancy and juvenile crime in the community and to increase average daily attendance for the schools. Patrol officers issue citations to suspected truants contacted during school hours, and students are returned to school to meet with their parents and a vice principal. Two citations are issued without penalty; the third citation results in referral to appropriate support services.

Results: Due in large part to this initiative, the daytime burglary rate is 75 percent below what it was in 1979. Haynes Hunter, who has worked in different capacities on the issue of truancy in Rohnert Park for more than 15 years, reported that the program is effective because it is a "high-visibility" effort. "Being on the street, being in contact with the kids makes them aware of the fact that we care. We want them to get their education."

New Haven, Connecticut

Program elements: The Stay in School Program targets middle school students who have just begun to have problems. Targeted students go to truancy court where a panel of high school students question them and try to identify solutions. After court, youth and attorney mentors are assigned to each student for support. The student and the court sign a written agreement, and after 2 months, students return to the court to review their contract and report on their progress.

Results: Denise Keyes Page, who recruits and trains mentors for this initiative, said: "This program works because it harnesses the power of peer pressure. Truants are judged and mentored by their peers, instead of just by adults who may seem distant and unconnected. Our program uses both the carrot and stick approaches, providing both supportive mentorship and real courtroom accountability to truant students. One of the evolving strengths of the program is that not only are we providing support to the truant, but we are serving as a resource to their parents."

Atlantic County, New Jersey

Program elements: The Atlantic County Project Helping Hand receives referrals from six Atlantic City and four Pleasantville elementary schools for youth in kindergarten through eighth grade who have 5 to 15 days of unexcused absences. A truancy worker meets with the youth and family to provide short-term family counseling, usually up to eight sessions. Referrals for additional social services are made on an as-needed basis. If the family fails to keep appointments, home visits are made to encourage cooperation. Once a truancy problem is corrected, the case is closed and placed on an aftercare/monitoring status with contact made at 30-, 60-, and 90-day intervals to ensure that truancy does not persist.

Results: During the past school year, 84 percent of the students who participated in the Atlantic County program had no recurrence of truancy. Colleen Denelsback of Project Helping Hand stated: "Our philosophy is one of early intervention, regarding both the age level and the number of unexcused absences. We stress that the earlier intervention takes place, the greater

the chance for positive outcomes. Early intervention will prevent truancy and later delinquency."

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Program elements: The THRIVE (Truancy Habits Reduced Increasing Valuable Education) initiative is a comprehensive antitruancy program spurred by an ongoing community partnership of law enforcement, education, and social service officials. Police bring a suspected truant to a community-run detention center where, within 1 hour of arrival, officials assess the youth's school status, release the youth to a parent or relative, and refer the family to any needed social service agencies. Parents are notified by the district attorney of potential consequences for repeat behavior. Parents who harbor youth with 15 days of consecutive unexcused absences are subject to misdemeanor charges.

Results: Since THRIVE's inception in 1989, the Oklahoma City Police Department reports a 33-percent drop in daytime burglary rates. Tom Steemen, the parent of a student who went through THRIVE, commented: "The first I heard of the program was when my son was caught and taken to the center. I was real glad to know they had something like THRIVE." His son Ken, age 15, said, "THRIVE shook me up. I knew [while in the police car] just how wrong I was."

Norfolk, Virginia

Program elements: The Norfolk, Virginia, school district uses software to collect data on students who are tardy, cut class, leave grounds without permission, are truant but brought back to school by police, or are absent without cause. Each school has a team composed of teachers, parents, and school staff that examines the data to analyze truancy trends. For example, a team may try to pinpoint particular locations where truant students are found during school hours and then place additional monitors in these locations. A team may also notice certain months when truancy is prevalent and then design special programs to curb truancy during those months.

Results: Ann Hall of the Norfolk Public Schools stated: "Attendance has improved at all levels of schools since 1992—2 percent at the elementary and secondary levels. The overall district average is up 1 percent. This is significant in that the legal attendance rate for 1994–95 is up to 93 percent. Tighter attendance policies, grading practices, and teamwork have led to this improvement...There are few, if any, teachers complaining that discipline and law violations are not being handled consistently throughout the district. This is a marked improvement over the report that was made in the teacher satisfaction survey conducted in 1988."

Marion, Ohio

Program elements: The Community Service Early Intervention Program focuses on potential truants during freshman year. Referred students are required to attend tutoring sessions as directed, give their time to community service projects, and participate in a counseling program. In addition, students are required to give back to the intervention initiative by sharing what they have learned with new students in the program and by recommending it to others who might benefit. Parental participation is required throughout the program. When the student has completed the 6-week sequence, school records relative

to truancy are nullified. If the student fails the program, formal court intervention is the next step.

Results: Of the 28 students who took part in the program one recent semester, 20 had improved attendance records and were expected to pass freshman year. The eight who did not improve their attendance records either moved from the school district or were removed from the school for failure to meet attendance requirements. Misty Swanger, community educator for this initiative, saw a general improvement in the grades and behavior of the students. Executive Director Christine Haas noted: "This program is a combination of early intervention and early attention. As long as the child knows that someone is watching out for them and taking an interest in them, they will not be truant. The attention factor is very important. It creates success." The intervention program has already identified 100 ninth-grade students with truancy problems to work with in the coming year.

Peoria, Arizona

Program elements: In Operation Save Kids, school officials contact the parents of students with three unexcused absences. Parents are expected to inform school officials of steps they have taken to ensure their children regularly attend school. When students continue to be truant, cases are referred to the local district attorney. To avoid criminal penalty and a $150 parent fine, youth are required to participate in an intensive counseling program, and parents must attend a parenting skills training program.

*Results:*Since Operation Save Kids began 2 years ago, daytime juvenile property crime rates have declined by 65 percent. Truancy citywide has been cut in half since 1994. "Look at today's truant, and you're looking at tomorrow's criminal," said Assistant City Attorney Terry Bays Smith.

Bakersfield, California

Program elements: A consortium of school districts in Kern County, California, formed the Truancy Reduction Program. Local schools reach out to youth with a history of truancy through parent contact, peer tutoring, and mentoring services. Persistently truant youth are referred to the County Probation Office. Probation officers visit parents at home one-on-one, check on the youth at school weekly, and in the majority of cases refer youth and their families to one or more needed social service agencies. The County Probation Office and the local school continue to track the youth for a full year before making a referral to the local District Attorney's Office.

Results: "The majority of graduates of the Truancy Reduction Program's first year no longer present a truancy problem," according to the Kern County Public Schools coordinator, Steve Hageman. More than a fifth of that 1994 class had perfect school attendance records in the year following their participation.

Resources

The U.S. Department of Justice provides Federal funding to States to implement local delinquency prevention programs, including programs that address truancy. Many of these programs address risk and protective factors. A large portion of the funding comes from the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Formula Grants Program, which is administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and

Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs. For more information contact the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 800-638-8736.

Under a jointly funded project, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education have developed a training and technical assistance project to help communities develop or enhance truancy prevention/intervention programs and programs that target related problems of youth out of the education mainstream. Training and technical assistance will be made available to 10 jurisdictions through a competitive application process in 1996. For more information contact Ron Stephens at the National School Safety Center, 805-373-9977.

For more information about the programs in this chapter, please call the U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug-Free Schools Office at 202-260-3954.

Uniforms

Uniforms

At the direction of President Clinton, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley sent a *Manual on School Uniforms* to every school district in the country in March 1996. Below is an excerpt from the manual as well as answers to some commonly asked questions on school uniforms. For a copy of the complete manual, please call 800-624-0100. The full text is also available throughout the U.S. Department of Education World Wide Web site at http://www.ed.gov.

School Uniforms: Why They Work and Where They Are

A safe and disciplined learning environment is the first requirement of a good school. Young people who are safe and secure, who learn basic American values and the essentials of good citizenship, are better students. In response to growing levels of violence in the Nation's schools, many parents, teachers, and school officials have come to see school uniforms as one positive and creative way to reduce discipline problems and increase school safety. They observed that the adoption of school uniform policies can promote school safety, improve discipline, and enhance the learning environment. The potential benefits of school uniforms include:

- ❑ Decreasing violence and theft—even life-threatening situations—among students over designer clothing or expensive sneakers.
- ❑ Helping prevent gang members from wearing gang colors and insignia at school.
- ❑ Instilling discipline in students.
- ❑ Helping parents and students resist peer pressure.
- ❑ Helping students concentrate on their school work.
- ❑ Helping school officials recognize intruders who come to the school.

As a result, many local communities are deciding to adopt school uniform policies as part of an overall program to improve school safety and discipline. California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Tennessee, Utah, and Virginia have enacted school uniform regulations. Many large public school systems—including Baltimore, Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Miami, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, New Orleans, Phoenix, Seattle, and St. Louis—have schools with either voluntary or mandatory uniform policies, mostly in elementary and middle schools. In addition, many private and parochial schools have required uniforms for a number of years. Still other schools have implemented dress codes to encourage a safe environment by, for example, prohibiting clothes with certain language or gang colors.

Users' Guide to Adopting a School Uniform Policy

The decision to adopt a uniform policy is made by States, local school districts, and schools. For uniforms to be a success, as with all other school initiatives, parents must be involved. The following information is provided to assist parents, teachers, and school leaders in determining whether to adopt a school uniform policy.

1. *Get parents involved from the beginning.*

Parental support of a uniform policy is critical for success. Indeed, the strongest push for school uniforms in recent years has come from parent groups who want better discipline in their children's schools. Parent groups have actively lobbied schools to create uniform policies and have often led school task forces that have drawn up uniform guidelines. Many schools that have successfully created a uniform policy survey parents first to gauge support for school uniform requirements and then seek parental input in designing the uniform. Parent support is also essential for encouraging students to wear the uniform.

2. *Protect students' religious expression.*

A school uniform policy must accommodate students whose religious beliefs are substantially burdened by a uniform requirement. As U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley stated in *Religious Expression in Public Schools*, a guide he sent to superintendents throughout the Nation on August 10, 1995:

> Students may display religious messages on items of clothing to the same extent that they are permitted to display other comparable messages. Religious messages may not be singled out for suppression, but rather are subject to the same rules as generally apply to comparable messages. When wearing particular attire, such as yarmulkes and head scarves, during the school day is part of students' religious practice, under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act schools generally may not prohibit the wearing of such items.

3. *Protect students' other rights of expression.*

A uniform policy may not prohibit students from wearing or displaying expressive items—for example, a button showing support for a political candidate—so long as such items do not independently contribute to disruption by substantially interfering with discipline or with the rights of others. Thus, for example, a uniform policy may prohibit students from wearing a button bearing a gang insignia. A uniform policy may also prohibit items that undermine the integrity of the uniform, notwithstanding their expressive nature, such as a sweatshirt that bears a political message but also covers or replaces the type of shirt required by the uniform policy.

4. *Determine whether to have a voluntary or mandatory school uniform policy.*

Some schools have adopted wholly voluntary school uniform policies that permit students freely to choose whether and under what circumstances they will wear the school uniform. Alternatively, some schools have determined that it is both warranted and more effective to adopt a mandatory uniform policy.

5. *When a mandatory school uniform policy is adopted, determine whether to have an "opt out" provision.*

In most cases, school districts with mandatory policies allow students, normally with parental consent, to "opt out" of the school uniform requirements.

Some schools have determined, however, that a mandatory policy with no "opt out" provision is necessary to address a disruptive atmosphere. A Phoenix, Arizona, school, for example, adopted a mandatory policy requiring students to wear school uniforms or attend another public school. That Phoenix school uniform policy was recently upheld by a State trial court in Arizona. However, in the absence of a finding that disruption of the learning environment has reached a point where other lesser measures have been or would be ineffective, a mandatory school uniform policy without an "opt out" provision could be vulnerable to legal challenge.

6. *Do not require students to wear a message.*

Schools should not impose a form of expression on students by requiring them to wear uniforms bearing a substantive message, such as a political message.

7. *Assist families that need financial help.*

In many cases, school uniforms are less expensive than the clothing that students typically wear to school. Nonetheless, the cost of purchasing a uniform may be a burden on some families. School districts with uniform policies should make provisions for students whose families are unable to afford uniforms. Many have done so. These are some examples of the types of assistance: (1) the school district provides uniforms to students who cannot afford to purchase them, (2) community and business leaders provide uniforms or contribute financial support for uniforms, (3) school parents work together to make uniforms available for economically disadvantaged students, and (4) used uniforms from graduates are made available to incoming students.

8. *Treat school uniforms as part of an overall safety program.*

Uniforms by themselves cannot solve all the problems of school discipline, but they can be one positive contributing factor to discipline and safety. Other initiatives that many schools have used in conjunction with uniforms to address specific problems in their community include aggressive truancy reduction initiatives, drug prevention efforts, student-athlete drug testing, community efforts to limit gangs, a zero tolerance policy for weapons, character education classes, and conflict resolution programs. Working with parents, teachers, students, and principals can make a uniform policy part of a strong overall safety program, one that is broadly supported in the community.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the President promoting school uniforms?

For the past 3 years, the President has actively been supporting activities that reduce violence and crime in schools. The Clinton administration is always looking for ideas or concepts that will help create safer schools. After talking to and working with schools that found reductions in crime and violence after adopting a uniform policy, the Clinton administration drafted the manual to assist communities that want to implement school uniform policies.

Is the President mandating that schools have a school uniform policy?

The President believes that it is a local decision whether to adopt a uniform policy. The school uniform manual developed by the Departments of Education and Justice merely provides guidance and assistance to local school districts and schools.

Is the cost of school uniforms prohibitive?

School uniforms are usually less expensive than the clothes students typically wear to school. Further, the manual gives some suggestions for schools that want to assist families in need of financial help to purchase uniforms.

Does a school uniform policy rob students of their individuality?

School uniform policies permit children to wear expressive items, such as a button that shows support for a political candidate, or a religious piece of clothing, such as a yarmulke or head scarf.

Will a school see reductions in crime, violence, and disruptions simply by adopting a uniform policy?

School uniform policies must be viewed as part of a comprehensive safe school strategy and should be combined with such other actions as training security personnel, implementing zero tolerance policies, and starting after-school programs.

Is the Department of Education recommending a specific uniform for schools?

Individual schools and school districts that choose to adopt uniform policies should determine what their uniforms are.

What is the most common school uniform?

No one style of uniform is predominant. The uniforms that schools have adopted cover a wide range of options for individual schools and school districts to consider.

Alternative Education Programs for Expelled Students

Alternative Education Programs for Expelled Students

A defining feature of life in America's schools today is the increasing incidence of violence. Nearly 3 million crimes take place in or near schools annually—one every 6 seconds of the school day.[1] These increases are occurring nationwide. Eighty-two percent of school districts surveyed by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) reported increasing violence within their schools during the past 5 years. Increasingly, incidents of violence reported in schools involve deadly weapons. More than 60 percent of school districts have reported weapon violations among their students.[2]

One prominent legislative and policy measure to ensure a safe school environment has been to require removal of disruptive and dangerous students. Typically this is accomplished through expulsions and long-term suspensions. For example, the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 requires a minimum 1-year expulsion for any student found to have carried a firearm on school grounds (See Preventing Juvenile Gun Violence in Schools, page 21).

School districts across the country report experiencing significant increases in both the number of students expelled and the length of time they are excluded from their schools. The consensus among educators and others concerned with at-risk youth is that it is vital for expelled students to receive educational counseling or other services to help modify their behavior and possibly other support services while they are away from their regular school. Without such services, students generally return to school no better disciplined and no better able to manage their anger or peaceably resolve disputes. They will also have fallen behind in their education, and any underlying causes of their violent behavior may be unresolved. Research has shown a link between suspension/expulsion and later dropping out of school, with resulting personal and social costs.

One reservation about providing services to expelled students has been the cost. However, data show it is less costly to address the problem behavior and its underlying causes as quickly as possible than to wait until the student becomes involved with the criminal justice or welfare systems later in life. The American Federation of Teachers has estimated that "for the [$1,750] additional dollars spent on each [disruptive] student attending an alternative school, the public annually gains $14,000 in student learning time that would have been lost, $2,800 in reduced grade repetition costs, $1,750 in reduced welfare costs, and $1,500 in reduced prison costs."[3] This is a total savings of $18,300 per student.

Promising Practices

School systems across the country are turning to alternative education programs to deliver educational and other services to expelled students. Some school systems are modifying existing programs to accommodate the larger numbers of students expelled for disruptive behaviors, while

others are creating new programs, often in collaboration with social agencies or nonprofit service organizations.

The programs typically differ from the expelled students' regular schools in these dimensions: the ratio of students to teachers, the way academic subject matter is presented, the setting of the program, the linkage of the school to the community or workplaces, the emphasis on behavior modification, the emphasis on counseling for conflict resolution and anger management, and the availability of comprehensive support services. Programs have been created for students as young as elementary age. Some seek to prepare students to return to their regular schools, and others prepare students to graduate from high school and enter the workforce or postsecondary education directly from the alternative program.

Components of Effective Alternative Education Programs

The components of effective alternative programs are:

- ❑ Lower student-to-staff ratio.
- ❑ Strong and stable leadership.
- ❑ Highly trained and carefully selected staff.
- ❑ A vision and set of objectives for the program that are shared by all staff and integrated into how staff and administrators interact with the program.
- ❑ Districtwide support of programs.
- ❑ Innovative presentation of instructional materials with an emphasis on real-life learning.
- ❑ Working relations with all parts of the school system and with other collaborating agencies that provide critical services to youth.
- ❑ Linkages between schools and workplaces.
- ❑ Intensive counseling and monitoring.

Examples of Alternative Education Programs

The following programs provide some examples of the varied alternative education programs that have been created for expelled students.

City-As-School Program, Buffalo, New York

The City-As-School (CAS) program in Buffalo, New York, places students as interns in dozens of sites across the city. Students earn academic credits for the work they perform—an English credit for work involving the theater, a newspaper, or other type of communication; a social studies credit for work at the local courts or community action agency. Students rotate through three or four internships each semester, becoming familiar with a variety of work environments and being exposed to a variety of role models. Throughout the program, each student also works on his or her Learning Experience Activity Packet (LEAP), a set of goals and activities customized for each student and each internship. The LEAP includes weekly assignments as well as a semester-long final product. The student's progress is monitored by his onsite supervisors and program teachers. Students attend weekly seminars at CAS offices. The program

elected to locate its offices on a college campus to expose the students to the possibilities of postsecondary education.

The CAS program has developed extensive support within the community. Because many businesses and agencies have volunteered to sponsor interns, the program has been able to serve more students. Program staff feel the experience produces major changes in the students. The students become more motivated and their negative behaviors are reduced. Sixty-five percent of the students are able to maintain 100 percent attendance for as long as 2 years, complete all their internships, and earn their high school diplomas. The staff point out that this graduation rate is considerably higher than that of comparable students who remain in the regular school program.

Community Academy, Boston, Massachusetts

The Community Academy (CA) is located in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. CA is designed to provide students with a safe and challenging academic learning environment in order to help them become successful and productive citizens. CA is housed in leased space in the Roxbury Boys and Girls Club. In working with students, CA uses a cognitive approach that focuses on modifying inappropriate behavior and enhancing academic potential. CA emphasizes small class size, low student-teacher ratios, and parental involvement. In addition to academic instruction, the program provides a vocational component and an advanced placement program, and students are eligible to earn dual enrollment credits at area colleges and universities. CA has also established community partnerships with several area businesses, civic organizations, and social service agencies for providing services to students.

The academic component of the program assigns students to small classes to work intensively with highly skilled and experienced teachers on core academic subjects. Teaching is individualized to each student's abilities and learning style, with the goal of bringing the student up to grade-level performance. Students are required to participate in a counseling program conducted by the program's staff psychologist that focuses on personal growth and development. The psychologist is also available to meet with students individually on an as-needed basis. However, students who may need intensive counseling are referred to area community health centers. Additionally, assessments, counseling, and drug awareness education are provided by the substance abuse clinicians. These staff meet with students on both an individual and group basis, but those students needing intensive/long-term treatment are also referred to the local community health center. Students are encouraged to participate in community service activities, work with a mentor, complete job-training classes, and explore advanced academic course work and post-secondary education.

Staff closely monitor student progress. Ratings for each student are based upon attendance, academic performance, disciplinary incidents, and clinical assessments. Although the program was designed under the assumption that the average student would require 2 years of service before returning to the regular

school, nearly 45 percent are judged ready after 1 year. Fewer than 15 percent of students entering the program are unable to complete it. More than 25 percent are able to complete some college-level work before leaving the CA program.

Borough Academies, New York, New York

The Borough Academies, located in New York City, serve students from the entire metropolitan area. The Borough Academies are designed primarily to help students develop positive behavior skills and secondarily to prepare students for entrance into college or a job. Students are provided with the opportunity to earn credits through vocational internships with employers throughout New York City. The key concept at the Borough Academies is behavior change through positive reinforcement and flexibility. Faculty are instructed to always use positive incentives and to present students with attainable goals. Students are told only what they can do, not what they cannot. The Borough Academies encourage flexibility not only from students but also from faculty and administrators. The program's three campuses are located in nontraditional settings—offices or apartment buildings.

The program provides students with a combination of academic and behavior management skills. The model initially focuses on teaching students how to manage their behavior positively. The principal feels that once students are able to manage their behavior they will be better prepared to reach their potential both as students and as citizens in the workplace. Students earn credits toward a New York City High School degree through the three components of the program: academic, guidance, and internship/vocational. Students choose their schedule each day under a program called "free options" whereby they can change the set of classes they attend every day. Students can earn credits as quickly as they want to and work at their own pace.

Since the inception of the Borough Academies, two classes have graduated. The Academies have an 86-percent graduation rate, and the majority of the students have gone on to college.

Resources

Alternative Schools for Disruptive Youth. National School Safety Center (NSSC) Resource Paper, 1987. This research paper presents background information on reasons some youth are disruptive, approaches to alternative education, and alternative schools as a way to provide services to suspended or expelled students.

Joy G. Dryfoos, *Adolescents at Risk: Prevalence and Prevention,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. *Adolescents at Risk* provides an overview of prevention programs, practices, and components that appear critical to success regardless of the high-risk behavior the program strives to prevent.

Alternative Schools for Disruptive Youth, School Safety, NSSC (winter 1991), pp. 8–11.

School Safety, NSSC (winter 1995). This special issue is devoted entirely to alternative education and provides several articles on a range of issues including early identification of problems, State initiatives, adult mentoring, and apprenticeship learning.

More information is available from:

Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-6123

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard
Suite 290
Westlake Village, California 91362
805-373-9977

National School Boards Association
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703-838-6722

National Association of State Boards of Education
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, Virginia, 22314
800-220-5183

Endnotes

1. National School Safety Center. 1993 (September). "School Safety Update." National School Safety Center News Service, p.1.

2. National School Boards Association, 1993. "Violence in the Schools: How America's School Boards Are Safeguarding Our Children." Alexandria, Virginia.

3. "Tiny Knife Sets Off Big Debate Over Right To Attend School." *Education Daily* 28, August 8, 1995 (166): 1-3.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution

Too many of our young people are caught up in conflicts every day that they do not know how to manage—teasing, jealousy, and physical aggression. Juvenile delinquency and violence are symptoms of youth's inability to manage conflict in their lives. Teaching youth how to manage conflict in a productive way can help reduce incidents of violent behavior. Conflict resolution education is a beneficial component of a comprehensive violence prevention and intervention program in schools and communities.

Conflict resolution education encompasses problem solving in which the parties in dispute express their points of view, voice their interests, and find mutually acceptable solutions. Conflict resolution education programs help the parties recognize that while conflict happens all the time, people can learn new skills to deal with conflict in nonviolent ways. The programs that appear to be most effective are comprehensive and involve multiple components such as the problem-solving processes and principles of conflict resolution, the basics of effective communication and listening, critical and creative thinking, and an emphasis on personal responsibility and self-discipline.

According to William DeJong, a lecturer at the Harvard School of Public Health, "The best school-based violence prevention programs seek to do more than reach the individual child. They instead try to change the total school environment, to create a safe community that lives by a credo of non-violence and multicultural appreciation."[1] Most school violence- prevention programs include conflict resolution education.

Effective conflict resolution education programs can:

- Enable children to respond nonviolently to conflict by using the conflict resolution problem-solving processes of negotiation, mediation, and consensus decisionmaking.
- Enable educators' ability to manage students' behavior without coercion by emphasizing personal responsibility and self-discipline.
- Mobilize community involvement in violence prevention through education programs and services, such as expanding the role of youth as effective citizens beyond the school into the community.

Four Common Strategies for Approaching Conflict Resolution

Experts identify four school-based conflict resolution strategies that can be replicated in other settings. These are commonly referred to as: (1) Peer Mediation, (2) Process Curriculum, (3) Peaceable Classrooms, and (4) Peaceable Schools. The Peaceable Schools model incorporates the elements of the other three approaches. In all four approaches, conflict resolution education is viewed as giving youth nonviolent tools to deal with daily conflicts that can lead to self-destructive and violent behaviors. It is up to each local school district to decide how conflict resolution education will be integrated into its overall educational environment. The expectation is that when youth learn to recognize and constructively address what takes place before conflict or differences lead to violence, the incidence

and intensity of that situation will diminish. The program examples provided below empower young people with the processes and skills of conflict resolution. However, youth need to know that conflict resolution does not take precedence over adult responsibility to provide the final word in a variety of circumstances or situations. Conflict resolution has a place in the home, school, and community, but it can only supplement, not supplant, adult authority.

Peer Mediation Approach

Recognizing the importance of directly involving youth in conflict resolution, many schools and communities are using the Peer Mediation approach. Under this approach, specially trained student mediators work with their peers to resolve conflicts. Mediation programs reduce the use of traditional disciplinary actions such as suspension, detention, and expulsion; encourage effective problem solving; decrease the need for teacher involvement in student conflicts; and improve school climate. An example of a Peer Mediation program is We Can Work It Out, developed by the National Institute for Citizenship Education in the Law and the National Crime Prevention Council. The program promotes mediation, negotiation, or other non-litigating methods as strategies to settle unresolved confrontations and fighting.

One Albuquerque elementary school principal reported, "We were having 100 to 150 fights every month on the playground before we started the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution's Mediation in the Schools Program. By the end of the school year, we were having maybe 10 (fights)."[2] Other elementary schools using the same Peer Mediation approach to conflict resolution education reported that playground fighting had been reduced to such an extent that peer mediators found themselves out of a job.

Process Curriculum Approach

Teachers who devote a specific time—a separate course, a distinct curriculum, or a daily lesson—to the principles, foundation abilities, and problem-solving processes of conflict resolution are implementing the Process Curriculum approach. The Program for Young Negotiators, based on the Harvard Negotiation Project, is representative of this approach. Participating students, teachers, and administrators are taught how to use principled negotiation to achieve goals and resolve disputes. This type of negotiation helps disputants envision scenarios and generate options for achieving results that satisfy both sides.

In a North Carolina middle school with more than 700 students, conflict resolution education was initiated. The school used the Peace Foundation's Fighting Fair curriculum and a combination of components from various conflict resolution projects. After a school year, in-school suspensions decreased from 52 to 30 incidents (a 42-percent decrease), and out-of-school suspensions decreased from 40 incidents to 1 (a 97-percent decrease).[3]

Peaceable Classroom Approach

The Peaceable Classroom approach integrates conflict resolution into the curriculum and daily management of the classroom. It uses the instructional methods of cooperative learning and "academic controversy." The Educators for Social Responsibility curriculum, Making Choices About Conflict, Security, and Peacemaking, is a peaceable classroom approach to conflict

resolution. The program shows teachers how to integrate conflict resolution into the curriculum, classroom management, and discipline practices. It emphasizes opportunities to practice cooperation, appreciation of diversity, and caring and effective communication. Generally, peaceable classrooms are initiated on a teacher-by-teacher basis into the classroom setting and are the building blocks of the peaceable school.

Studies on the effectiveness of the Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers program, a Peaceable Classroom approach to conflict resolution, show that discipline problems requiring teacher management decreased by approximately 80 percent and referrals to the principal were reduced to zero.[4]

Peaceable School Approach

The Peaceable School approach incorporates the above three approaches. This approach seeks to create schools where conflict resolution has been adopted by every member of the school community, from the crossing guard to the classroom teacher. A peaceable school promotes a climate that challenges youth and adults to believe and act on the understanding that a diverse, nonviolent society is a realistic goal. In Creating the Peaceable School Program of the Illinois Institute for Dispute Resolution, students are empowered with conflict resolution skills and strategies to regulate and control their own behavior. Conflict resolution is infused into the way business is conducted at the school between students, between students and teachers and other personnel, between teachers and administrators, and between parents and teachers and administrators.

In an evaluation of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program in four multiethnic school districts in New York City, teachers of the Peaceable School approach to conflict resolution reported a 71-percent decrease in physical violence in the classroom and observed 66 percent less name calling and fewer verbal insults.[5] Other changes in student behavior reported by the teachers included greater acceptance of differences, increased awareness and articulation of feelings, and a spontaneous use of conflict resolution skills throughout the school day in a variety of academic and nonacademic settings.

Conflict Resolution Education in Other Settings

The usefulness of conflict resolution programs is not limited to traditional school settings. These programs are also a meaningful component of safe and violence-free juvenile justice facilities and alternative education programs. In these settings, conflict resolution programs are introduced not to replace but to supplement existing disciplinary policies and procedures. When opportunities are created to learn and practice conflict resolution principles and strategies in these settings, youth may receive positive life skills and acquire behaviors to carry with them throughout their lives. No longer do they need to feel that a crosswise look or a cutting remark requires a physical challenge that can lead to violent outcomes. They learn to control their anger and to react in a nonconfrontational manner to diffuse the situation. When youth practice conflict resolution principles and skills on a regular basis, they begin to experience greater satisfaction in their lives.

The Youth Corrections Mediation Program of the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution teaches youth and staff in juvenile justice facilities communication skills and combines the conflict resolution curricula with mediation. This program has a reintegration component in which families negotiate agreements for daily living before the juvenile offenders return home. The program emphasizes the need to model and practice communication and the problem-solving processes of conflict resolution. By providing alternatives to resolving conflicts, the program gives youth a model for positive expression and the peaceful resolution of problems. An evaluation study of the program reported a 37-percent decrease in disciplinary infractions among youth mediators compared with 12-percent for youth not trained as mediators. This study also found that the recidivism rate among youth trained as mediators was 18-percent lower during the first 6 months after returning to the community than for a control group not trained in mediation.[6] The knowledge and skills of conflict resolution give these former offenders the tools to defuse or resist conflict situations and get along better with family, friends, teachers, supervisors, and fellow students or fellow employees.

Taking what they have gleaned back into the community and family settings is often the biggest challenge young people face with conflict resolution training, especially when others are not similarly trained. A number of conflict resolution education programs have either originated in the community and moved into the school or moved from the school into the community. Regardless of their origin, the programs enhance the quality of life in the home, school, and community. Parent and community conflict resolution education programs build on and complement the school program. These programs provide common vocabulary and problem-solving processes that serve as critical linkages for youth who have been trained in conflict resolution in schools.

Community Mediation Centers

Community mediation centers are located in more than 400 communities across the country. These centers, which are typically nonprofit community-based agencies, use trained community volunteers to provide a wide range of mediation services to youth and adults. Through these centers, mediation has been applied in common conflict situations found in the community, schools, and families, such as gangs, business complaints of juvenile loitering, school suspensions, truancy, and parent/child relationships, as well as in juvenile justice settings. Community mediation centers also offer training in conflict resolution processes and skills that may be used effectively in personal and professional life for all age groups. Nationwide community mediation centers have collaborated with law enforcement, schools, and other youth-serving agencies in developing and implementing community-based comprehensive violence prevention and intervention programs. A listing of local community mediation centers is available from the National Association for Community Mediation. (See contact information under "Resources.")

Conclusion

The effective conflict resolution education programs highlighted above have helped to improve the climate in school, community and juvenile justice settings by reducing the number of disruptive and violent acts in

these settings; by decreasing the number of chronic school absences due to a fear of violence; by reducing the number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions; by increasing academic instruction during the school day; and by increasing the self-esteem and self-respect, as well as the personal responsibility and self-discipline of the young people involved in these programs.

Young people cannot be expected to promote and encourage the peaceful resolution of conflicts if they do not see conflict resolution principles and strategies being modeled by adults in all areas of their lives, such as in business, sports, entertainment, and personal relationships. Adults play a part in making the environment more peaceful by practicing nonviolent conflict resolution when minor or major disputes arise in their daily lives.

Resources

Providing guidance on conflict resolution education programs, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the Department of Justice, in partnership with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program of the Department of Education, has developed a guide entitled *Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings.* The guide is designed to be a tool for teachers, administrators, school board members, school site-based management teams, and youth-serving and juvenile justice professionals to use in their strategic planning for implementing conflict resolution education programs that meet their specific needs. It also includes a reading list and annotated lists of conflict resolution programs by approach, resources, and trainers with contact information.
In addition to the guide, OJJDP has a videotape from a satellite teleconference on conflict resolution education, which was based on the guide. Experts and practitioners in conflict resolution discussed the benefits and importance of teaching youth the skills to resolve disputes without violence. Model programs across the country were showcased. To receive a copy of either the guide or videotape, contact OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at 800-638-8736.

For information on local community mediation centers, contact the National Association for Community Mediation at 1726 M Street, NW., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036 or at 202-467-4769, and by fax at 202-466-4769.

For information on establishing conflict resolution programs for schools and a list of best practices, contact Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202, 202-260-3954.

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Mentoring in Schools

Mentoring In Schools

Most adolescents are on the healthy path to productive adult lives. There is evidence, however, that 25 percent of adolescents are at significant risk of veering off that path because they frequently engage in behaviors with negative consequences, such as alcohol or other drug abuse, sexual activity with its potential for sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy, truancy, delinquency, or violence. Another 25 percent of adolescents, who engage in fewer of these behaviors, are at moderate risk.[1]

A 1992 study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation determined that only 60 percent of an adolescent's nonsleeping time is taken up by school, homework, chores, meals, or employment. Many adolescents spend the remaining 40 percent of their nonsleeping time alone, with peers without adult supervision, or with adults who might negatively influence their behavior.[2] A recent study found that 27 percent of eighth-graders spent 2 or more hours alone after school and that low-income youth were more likely than others to be home alone for 3 or more hours.[3]

Similarly, the Study of Causes and Correlates of Delinquency, sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), found the influence of peers and lack of supervision by parents to be strong risk factors in the causes of delinquency.[4] It is not surprising, therefore, that most acts of juvenile delinquency take place at the close of the school day, when opportunities for constructive activities are too often unavailable.

While these are disturbing trends, there is growing belief that mentoring can, in many instances, help young people change direction and do better academically and socially. Mentoring has been defined as a sustained, close, developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a younger person, with the goal of building character and competence on the part of the protégé. Usually the relationship involves regular contact over a sustained period of time and involves mutual commitment, respect, and loyalty. Mentors need not be experts in drug prevention, remedial tutoring, antisocial behavior, or family counseling. Studies have shown that individuals who gain the trust of youth through interaction and time can have great influence on their lives.

Users' Guide to Establishing Mentoring Programs

The planning stages of developing a mentorship program are very important. Because mentor programs are built on shared trust and respect of the people involved, much care should be given to its implementation. The following steps are loosely based on those developed by the National Association of Partners in Education, a nonprofit organization in Alexandria, Virginia, which has extensive experience in school-community and school-business partnership programs.

Coordination and assessment. A small team or group of individuals or staff must work together to plan and execute an effective program. This group must assess the need for mentors and determine what resources are available in the community. In addition to volunteer mentors, assistance in the areas of training, sponsorship of travel, provision

of meeting space, and media and communications could be helpful.

Setting goals and objectives. For a mentor program to be successful, it must have well-defined goals and measurable objectives. One of the first tasks for the team is to determine what the program's goals and objectives should be. These can vary from broad goals to specific, structured ones. For example, while many school-based mentoring programs focus on upgrading social and academic skills, programs in the past have specified increasing career awareness or a greater understanding of civic responsibility.

Recruiting mentors and mentees. The focus of the program should determine the types of individuals to be recruited. Traditionally, there has been a shortage of mentors in most programs. To ensure an adequate number of mentors, they can be recruited through a school's volunteer office, a company's director of public relations, and community organizations that sponsor volunteer programs. Targeted recruiting in local colleges or universities, local newspapers, TV and radio stations, and local businesses is also a good tactic. Senior citizens can be exemplary mentors and may be contacted through senior citizen organizations like the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Selecting mentors and mentees. Eligibility screening for participation in mentorship programs could include an application process and review, face-to-face interview, and a reference check for mentors with written eligibility requirements for program participants. It is a good idea not only to get parental consent, but to involve parents to the maximum extent possible by sharing the program's goals and objectives and keeping them informed of specific events. If the mentoring programs have activities off school grounds, careful history checks of applicants are needed.

Training mentors. It is recommended that each mentor be trained before he or she is paired with a mentee. Sessions should be used to clarify the program's goals and focus on providing insight into the way young people behave and communicate. Methods for effectively communicating with mentees and their parents and lessons on adolescent development are useful topics for training. Ongoing feedback sessions allow for targeted training and assistance, as well as provide mentors an opportunity to compare notes.

Pairing or matching. While most programs use surveys that explore shared interests and hobbies to determine which individuals make good pairs, choosing a good match is as much an art as it is a science. Studies are inconclusive as to whether individuals from similar socioeconomic, racial, or ethnic backgrounds make the best pairs. Flaxman and Ascher believe that more subtle characteristics like caretaking or nurturing styles, energy levels and approach to adventure, or rigidity versus a tolerance for ambiguity and conflict may be better indicators of why relationships flourish or falter.[5] When a bad match does occur, steps should be taken to reassign both parties. Organizers must be prepared to deal with other obstacles that may arise, including serious issues of behavior such as violence, drug use, extreme depression, or suicide threats by the young person.

Keeping enthusiasm alive. Many mentoring programs fail due to poor participation or absenteeism on the part of the mentor or the mentee. To minimize "dropouts," some programs have pooled mentors so that two or more sets of mentoring pairs meet

together. Sometimes dropouts occur due to a lack
of initiative on the young person's part or unrealistic expectations on the part of the mentor. Some of these issues can be solved by discussions with the mentor's supervisors or additional periodic training. Enthusiasm can be maintained by frequent interaction among mentors, public recognition ceremonies, positive publicity, and parental participation.

Evaluating the program. While program staff naturally prefer to direct resources into the operations of a mentoring program, rather than into its assessment, formal evaluations are an important component in determining which methods or decisions have been successful and should be replicated. They also serve as positive reinforcement to both volunteers as well as the coordinating team. Ideally, evaluations should be planned at the outset of a program and be completed by a third party. However, data that will be used as program variables can be collected along the way. Some examples are length of meetings, location of meetings, length of mentoring relationship, and significant events.

Promising Practices

There are numerous examples of mentoring programs throughout the country that are sponsored by schools, communities, social and religious organizations, and private corporations. The resource section lists several publications that include a variety of examples. The two mentoring programs listed below have proven effective over time and in evaluations.

"Bigs in Blue" is an innovative mentoring program developed by the Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentor program of Warren County, New Jersey. It matches at-risk youth with police officer mentors. They employ prevention and intervention strategies to help youngsters from chaotic home environments cope with peer pressure, succeed in school, and make career decisions and sound lifestyle choices. Evaluations completed by parents, volunteers, and youth indicate reductions in delinquency and court involvement and improvement in school attendance, behavior, and grades.[6]

Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, Illinois, the largest public housing development in the country, has implemented a Mentoring and Rites of Passage program designed to assist adolescents in their transition to adulthood. Mentors meet with groups of 10–15 youths of similar ages at least twice a week and address such areas as self-concept, communications and decisionmaking, and cultural heritage appreciation. Evaluations of participants are conducted every 6 months to track their interpretation of standard social interactions and situations, self-reported violent behavior and self-concept, hospital visits related to violence, and calls to the police about violent events in the housing project.[7]

Research and Evaluation

A 1995 evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring program conducted by Public/Private Ventures provides evidence that mentoring programs positively affect young people. Those between the ages of 10–16 in the mentoring program were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol and were less likely to be violent. In addition, the study found that participants had improved their school attendance and performance, experienced positive attitudes toward completing school work, and improved their peer and family relation-

ships. The impact was even greater among minority participants: Male and female minority participants were approximately 70 percent less likely to initiate drug use, and female minority participants were 54 percent less likely to initiate alcohol use.[8]

A 1990–1991 *New York City School Volunteer Program* evaluation found that participants in their program made significant progress in reading and math, as judged by both teachers and volunteers. They also showed improved self-confidence and a better attitude toward school.[9]

Resources

The Department of Justice, through OJJDP, is providing funding to 41 mentoring programs under the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). An evaluation of the JUMP is being conducted currently to determine its effectiveness and lessons learned in preventing delinquency. For more information on these mentoring programs and the evaluation, contact OJJDP at 202–307–5914.

U.S. Department of Education. *One on One, A Guide for Establishing Mentor Programs.* Washington, D.C., 1990. This guide discusses the nuts and bolts of establishing a mentor program, from needs assessment and working with parents to evaluating the program. It also includes examples of successful programs and suggestions on selection, training, and tracking mentors as well as on recruiting participants.

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Information Sharing and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Information Sharing and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Schools are often called upon to provide information regarding current or former students to a variety of individuals and organizations. For example, social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, youth-serving organizations, and health agencies often seek information concerning students to whom they are providing services. While the sharing of information contained in records systems (education and law enforcement records) maintained by the school is critical to the effective delivery of services, it cannot be done indiscriminately because Federal laws restrict the release of information contained in a student's education records.

Enacted in 1974, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy interests of students and parents through standards designed to discourage abusive and unwarranted disclosure of a student's education records. FERPA provides parents access to education records and limits nonconsensual disclosure. Failure of an educational agency or institution to comply with FERPA can result in the loss of Federal funding.

Many State and local educational agencies and institutions narrowly interpret FERPA in their information release policies. Educators frequently decide to err on the side of caution by establishing policies recognizing a generalized right to privacy with regard to all information on students. Unfortunately, overly restrictive policies pose significant obstacles to meaningful information sharing between agencies.

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA) amended FERPA to permit educators, pursuant to a State statute, to disclose information to State and local officials, as long as the disclosure concerns the juvenile justice system. As a result, schools in States that have passed such statutes may now disclose information on students to other local and State agencies.

For example, the State of Florida enacted legislation requiring the State's Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS) to establish an early delinquency intervention program with the cooperation of local law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, district school board personnel, the office of the State's Attorney, the office of the Public Defender, and community service agencies that work with children. The Florida law specifies the type of information the cooperating agencies are to share with the DHRS and directs specified agencies and persons to cooperate with law enforcement agencies with regard to releasing information about juvenile offenders.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is FERPA?

FERPA is a Federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children's

education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records. When a student turns 18 or enters college, the rights under FERPA transfer to the student.

What is an "education record"?

FERPA defines "education record" as a record that contains information directly related to a student and that is maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for such agency or institution. The following types of records are examples of education records: report cards, surveys and assessments, health unit records, special education records, or information about parents maintained by a school.

What type of information is included in an education record?

FERPA does not address the types of information a school may or may not maintain in education records. Rather, FERPA affords parents and eligible students rights with respect to any education records maintained by an educational agency or institution. However, as noted above, the term "education record" is very broad and, with limited exceptions, includes most information that schools maintain on students.

Who controls or manages an education record?

Each educational agency or institution determines which officials are responsible for maintaining education records and for ensuring that parents are afforded their rights under FERPA.

What is a "law enforcement unit record"?

A "law enforcement unit record" is a record that is maintained by a law enforcement unit of the school or school district that was created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement.

What is a "law enforcement unit"?

A "law enforcement unit" is an individual, office, department, division, or other component of a school or school district, such as a unit of commissioned police officers or noncommissioned security guards, that is officially authorized or designated by the school district to (1) enforce any Federal, State, or local law or (2) maintain the physical security and safety of schools in the district. Larger metropolitan school districts, such as the Houston (Texas) Independent School District, employ commissioned police officers who have the responsibility of enforcing laws. However, many smaller school districts do not hire commissioned police officers but rather officially designate an individual in the district with the responsibilities of a law enforcement unit.

What information can be shared from a law enforcement unit record?

FERPA does not prohibit the sharing of information from a law enforcement unit record. A record such as a crime or incident report that is created and maintained for a law enforcement purpose is not protected from disclosure by FERPA. Although a student's education records may be shared with a school's law enforcement unit, the

law enforcement unit may not disclose the education records without prior parental or student consent (if the student is 18 years or older) or under a specified exception in FERPA.

What information from an education record can be shared with (1) other law enforcement entities and (2) non-law enforcement entities?

Subject to certain exceptions, FERPA provides that schools must obtain written consent from a parent or guardian before disclosing education records to a third party. However, there are several exceptions to this general rule.

One exception allows a school to disclose information from a student's education records to appropriate authorities in connection with an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of a student or other individuals.

Another exception allows a school to disclose information from a student's education records in compliance with a lawfully issued subpoena or court order. Generally, before complying with a subpoena or court order for education records, a school must make a reasonable effort to notify the parent. However, a school need not notify the parent if the subpoena or court order has been issued for a law enforcement purpose and the court or other issuing agency orders that the existence or contents of the subpoena not be disclosed.

Nothing in FERPA prevents a school official from disclosing to local law enforcement authorities information that is based on that official's personal knowledge or observation and not from an education record.

Schools may also disclose any information on a student, without the parent's prior written consent, to officials of another school where the student seeks or intends to enroll.

Additionally, Federal, State, and local educational authorities may be provided information on students in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal or State-supported education programs or with the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs.

Does FERPA permit schools to work effectively with juvenile justice system agencies to address juvenile violence and delinquency?

Yes. As previously noted, FERPA allows schools—while maintaining compliance with the law—to play a vital role in a community's efforts to identify at-risk and delinquent youth and provide services before a child becomes involved in serious and violent crime. As more and more States establish programs for the sharing of information designed to serve students as part of a juvenile justice system, the emphasis on neighborhood school participation in interagency information-sharing agreements will increase. FERPA need not be a barrier to this progress toward proactive information-sharing networks.

How can a school obtain technical assistance on FERPA?

The U.S. Department of Education and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice, are working together to develop and publish a guidebook entitled *FERPA: Schools and Interagency Communication for Delinquency Intervention and Prevention* for educators and juvenile justice professionals who are interested in developing interagency information-sharing agreements. The guidebook is designed to eliminate areas of ambiguity and provide clear guidance for allowable information sharing while maintaining State and local compliance with FERPA.

The Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education is responsible for administering FERPA. Any educational agencies or institutions with specific questions on FERPA needing technical assistance or desiring inservice training may contact the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20202-4605. Additionally, institutions may contact the office by e-mail at FERPA@ED.Gov or by calling 202-260-3887.

Effective Data Collection for Safe Public Schools: Exemplary Practices

Effective Data Collection for Safe Public Schools Exemplary Practices

Schools and school districts around the Nation vary widely in whether and how they collect and track data on incidents of student violence and discipline. However, without accurate and consistent data to analyze, it is difficult for educators, parents, and communities to draw conclusions on the impact of any policy relating to safer public schools, much less to determine which schools are doing a good job and where resources should be concentrated. To help communities address this vital need, the following examples of exemplary data collection strategies being used by certain school districts in the country have been compiled. These examples may assist local education agencies looking for better methods of information gathering to develop a system that best suits their needs

Elements of a Good Data Collection Strategy

As more and more school districts recognize the benefits of accurate data, they will want to share "best practices." One of the best suggestions for school districts to begin a data collection process is to talk with other school districts with similar information needs. The school districts should also:

- ❑ Start with a clear and concise policy regarding discipline, conduct, and safety in the school.
- ❑ Involve parents, law enforcement, youth service agencies, lawmakers, and other community members in the development of a data collection strategy.
- ❑ Make any automated system easy to learn and use.
- ❑ Establish parameters with the community of data users. For example, establish whether the system will record weapons violations by combining all weapons violations under one category, by identifying firearms versus knives versus explosives, or by distinguishing among types of firearms.
- ❑ Explore State statutes or regulations regarding data collection and release of information.
- ❑ Ensure student privacy by deleting any student identifier, such as name or social security number. (A section in this guide, "Information Sharing," further explores the topic of student records and privacy).
- ❑ Review data periodically to ensure data integrity; a system is only as good as the information included.
- ❑ Take every opportunity to use the information in a positive and constructive manner, emphasizing intervention and prevention.

Norfolk Public School District

Norfolk, Virginia
SMART Program

The Norfolk Public School District's School Management and Resource Teams (SMART) program was funded by a joint grant from the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. The Norfolk effort establishes a team for each school and decentralizes responsibility for discipline to those teams. Part of the SMART program includes an Incident Profiling System (IPS) that is a simple-to-use, computerized tracking system available in each of Norfolk's schools. Data are collected on the nature of the violation, location of the incident, and the disciplinary action taken. Student names are not included. Using this data, school teams identify three primary patterns of disruption within their school, report to the district level, and work together to recommend solutions for improvement.

Benefits. This school district believes that the SMART process has contributed to a steady decline in the number of incidents as well as in the seriousness of the incidents. The data collected in IPS allow month-by-month tracking and year-over-year comparison to be done quickly. The data also become the basis for interacting with other agencies like the juvenile courts and have resulted in targeted police monitoring of truancy. During parent conferences, teachers can access a student's record in the IPS (which also includes class schedules, test scores, and grade point average), allowing for a holistic approach to student progress.

More Information: Bill Delk
Director of Pupil Personnel
804-441-2811

Dade County Public Schools

Miami, Florida
SPAR System

Dade County Public Schools use a computer system called School Police Automated Reporting (SPAR) to record incidents of violence involving students. Once an incident occurs on a school campus, on school-sponsored transportation, or even off-campus, the school notifies the Dade County Public Schools (DCPS) Police Department. The DCPS Police enters the incident information into the SPAR system, and a unique SPAR number is assigned. By assigning a SPAR number to each incident of violence, the system links the district's data base for student discipline with that of the local schools' computers. Each school has access to the SPAR number as well as to the information entered, and makes disciplinary decisions. The schools are responsible for updating the system with any relevant information on the incident.

The SPAR system enables teachers and authorized persons to obtain "batch" or profile reports that can identify student demographics and incident details such as number of students involved, type of violation, location of incident, and type of disciplinary action taken. A summary report is submitted annually to the Florida Department of Education.

Benefits. SPAR's ability to produce so many different types of reports aids security personnel and administrators in developing individual school security plans.

More Information: E.O. "Red" McAllister
Chief of Police
305-754-9630

Anaheim Union High School District

Anaheim, California
IPS

The Anaheim Union High School District is the designated West Coast Resource Site for school districts interested in implementing the SMART (School Management and Resource Team) program. As part of this program, the Incident Profiling System (IPS), which operates on the school district's computers, is used by each school to record all disciplinary infractions and criminal acts, including law violations and education code violations. The IPS generates reports describing patterns of disruptions and crimes. Data are reviewed by teams at all school sites each month and are used to problem-solve as well as to set goals and determine solutions for the sites. The district's SMART committee reviews the data based on a districtwide concern for monitoring activity and developing prevention strategies. Data are used on a regular basis by site administrators to monitor student behavior and to develop intervention, support, or disciplinary plans.

Benefits. IPS helps the school district to:

- ❑ Obtain objective incidence data that indicate the levels of safety in schools.
- ❑ Analyze data in order to eradicate race and gender disparities in referrals and suspensions.
- ❑ Reduce paperwork.
- ❑ Precisely identify and target specific problems.
- ❑ Strengthen the school improvement process.
- ❑ Collect informal incident reports, enabling a proactive approach to discipline.

More Information: Bob Montenegro
Safe Schools Administrator
714-999-5655

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

Nashville, Tennessee
AIMS System

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools use the Automated Information Management System (AIMS) to record data and create reports on student violations. When an incident of violence occurs in this system, the principal makes a verbal report by telephone to the school's director of administrative services. From the director's office a typewritten account of the incident, called an Infogram, is created to alert the Board of Education about the matter. Eventually, the principal completes a Student Incident Report, which compiles the details and the outcome of the violation. Once the disciplinary action to be taken is determined, secretaries at each school enter actions taken with reason codes into AIMS. School personnel download the information each attendance period into the mainframe, from which printouts of suspension data may be obtained. Based on the information entered into AIMS, various types of reports can be generated. For example, suspension data can be retrieved from AIMS according to school, grade, gender, race, or any other variable already in the system.

More Information: Joseph Anderson
Director of Safety and Security
615-259-8747

Detroit Public Schools
Detroit, Michigan
AIMS

The Detroit Public Schools use the Automated Information Management System (AIMS) for processing code of conduct violations that warrant suspension, transfer, or expulsion. Once a student's guilt is established, AIMS assigns a unique identification code to the incident and codes the incident type, location, disciplinary action taken, and any other pertinent information. In addition to reporting all incidents of violence to the Student Code of Conduct Office, serious incidents, which include assaults that require medical attention and those that result in arrest, are also reported to the Public Safety Office. Detroit's system allows school personnel to generate year-to-year comparisons and reports by month, semester, or school year. Reports may also be categorized by district, area, gender, grade level, and school.

Benefits. By keeping a record of students who are in the suspension track, AIMS ensures due process of rights for students and parents. This is important because no student may be transferred out of her or his school without justification and proof from AIMS that all other options and interventions have been exhausted.

Resources

For those school districts interested in comparing their statistical information to national data, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) at the Department of Justice attached a School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1988. Based on students ages 12–19 enrolled in a school program leading to a high school diploma, the information includes student demographic characteristics, violent and property victimization data, fear of crime measures, drug and alcohol availability, weapons use, and school security measures. The BJS report based on this study, *School Crime,* is available from the BJS Clearinghouse (800–732–3277) or may be downloaded from the BJS World Wide Web site (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/). The data file used to produce the report may be obtained on diskette from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data by calling 800–999–0960, or from their World Wide Web site (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/nacjd/home.html).

A replication of this study, funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) was attached to the NCVS in 1995 and is currently being processed and analyzed. Measures are similar to those included in the 1988 study but provide expanded information on weapons prevalence and use, measures of gang presence and activity, and school characteristics derived from NCES files. The reports should be available in early 1997.

Research and Evaluation Findings

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Statistics in Brief October 1995

Student Victimization at School

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Most Americans would agree that all schools should provide an environment that is safe for students. Unfortunately, this ideal presents a serious challenge in a society where crime against students and teachers at schools, as well as other threats to security and a sense of well being, are reported with alarming frequency. The National Crime Victimization Survey data show that an estimated 2.7 million violent crimes take place annually either at school or near schools.[1] About one in four public school teachers rated physical conflicts among students as being a serious or moderately serious problem in their schools.[2] The possibility that students may experience or be threatened by robbery and physical assault while at school has sparked national concern. So widespread is the image of students as victims that one of the National Education Goals proposes that, "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." Identifying the incidence of violence in schools and the extent of fear of violence at school among students is necessary in order to measure progress toward reaching that goal.

This report presents information on personal student victimization from a national survey of 6th- through 12th-grade students conducted in the spring of 1993. The data reported are from the 1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES:93) conducted by Westat for the National Center for Education Statistics. This report is based upon the responses of the 6,504 students in grades 6 through 12 who were surveyed.[3] Weights were applied to make the survey estimates applicable to the entire population of children in grades 6 through 12.[4]

The estimates provided here reflect only incidents that occurred at school, including those that may have happened at school-related events, such as sports activities, that are held during the school day, or on the way to or from school. Studies such as the National Crime Victimization Survey have typically defined "victimization" as direct personal experience of threats or harm. This report expands the definition of victimization to include knowledge or witness of crime or incidents of bullying at school. The American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth asserts, for example, that "even youth who are not direct victims of violence may be victimized by the chronic presence of violence in their communities."[5] Certainly the same would be applicable to schools. Students who have reason to fear for their safety at school would encounter a very different learning environment than would students who have no reason to worry about becoming victims of crime or threats at school.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement NCES 95-204

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The NHES:93 results suggest that unsafe conditions at school are a reality for most U.S. students (table 1). Half of 6th- through 12th-grade students personally witnessed some type of crime or victimization at school, and about one out of eight students reported being directly victimized at school. The findings also suggest that students at some schools may be more vulnerable than students at other schools.

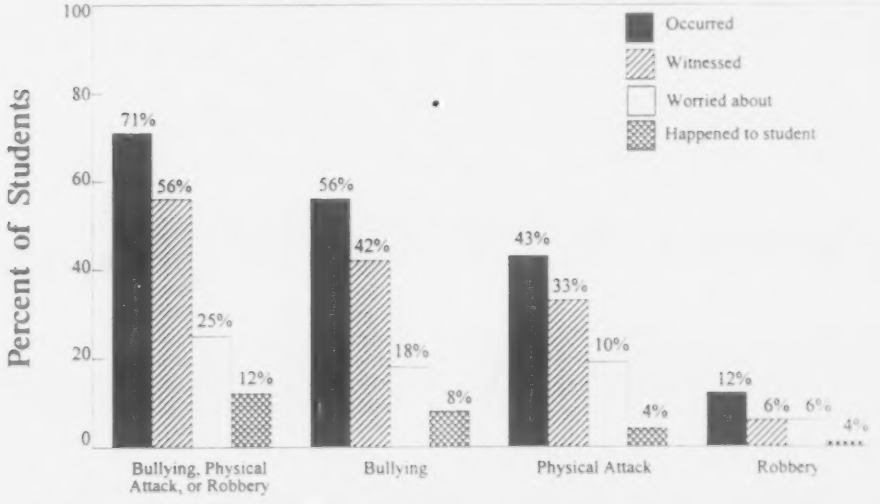
Student Reports of Crime and Threats at School

Students were asked to report incidents of crime or threats of crime at their schools or on the way to or from school since the beginning of the 1992–93 school year. Data were collected from January through April 1993. Crime or threats may be manifested in a variety of ways. For this report, three types of incidents examined in the NHES:93 were considered, specifically, bullying (repeated threat of harm), any kind of physical attack, and robbery (taking something directly by force or threat of force). Students were asked first whether they knew of each type of incident having happened at their school. Those who said they had knowledge of unsafe incidents at school that year were also asked whether they had seen any incidents like that happen to someone else, whether they worried that kind of thing might happen to them, and whether it had, in fact, ever happened to them during that school year. Students were not asked to report whether they had experienced multiple victimizations of the same type, for example, whether they had been robbed more than once.

Robbery and physical attack were measured because they are occurrences commonly reported in the media. "Physical attack" included students getting into fights at school as well as other types of physical assault. Preliminary research conducted during the design phase of the NHES:93 suggested that fist fights at school are treated as serious infractions by school administrators, and students themselves view them as dangerous. Students are physically and emotionally victimized by fights as well as by being attacked. Bullying also jeopardizes the well-being of students.[6] It, too, contributes to an adverse school environment.

A large majority of students in the 6th through 12th grades, 71 percent, reported having knowledge of bullying, physical attack, or robbery at their schools during the current school year (figure 1 and table 1). The greatest percentage of students (56 percent) reported that bullying had occurred in their schools, followed

Figure 1.—Sixth- through twelfth-graders' reports of the occurrence, witnessing, worry about, or victimization, by selected incidents: 1993



*Students who reported more than one type of incident are included in the overall victimization percentages only one time

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993

by physical attack (43 percent), and robbery (12 percent). At least one incident of bullying, physical attack, or robbery was witnessed by about half of all students (56 percent). Given these reports, fear of threats or crime at school is rather low: 25 percent of students reported being worried about being victimized at school. Approximately one-third of 6th- through 12th-grade students reported having witnessed a physical attack at school, and 1 out of 10 students worried about being attacked at school.

Twelve percent of students, or about one out of eight, reported having been directly and personally victimized at school during the current school year. Physical attack, a major source of public concern, was reported by a total of 4 percent of students, while victimization by bullying was reported by 8 percent (figure 1 and table 2). Robbery, or having things taken by force or threat of force, was uncommon, with only about 1 percent of students reporting that they were victimized in this manner.

Reports of Crime and Threats, by School and Student Characteristics

Differences by school grade level. The prevalence of events relating to student victimization varied significantly according to whether the school attended was an elementary school, a middle or junior high school, or a senior high school. It is worth noting that only 11 percent of students in grades 6 through 12 attended an elementary school. According to the definitions of school grade level used in this report, elementary and middle or junior high school students would, on average, be younger than high school students.[7] Thus, age of student may be a confounding factor in the findings about school grade level.

Attending school in an environment where disturbing events are known to happen and have been witnessed may have an impact upon students' sense of security, potentially contributing to less effective learning. According to students, incidents of bullying, physical attack, or robbery occurred in schools at all grade levels, and a majority of students witnessed at least one of these incidents (table 1). Witnessing these types of incidents did not vary significantly for students at schools of different grade levels. Nevertheless, students' worry about victimization decreased after middle or junior high school:

- More elementary (29 percent) and middle and junior high school students (34 percent) said they worried about becoming victims at school than did senior high school students (20 percent).

Perhaps the most traumatizing exposure to danger at school is through personal experience. Although more students knew about or had seen an incident than had been personally a victim, many students were also the direct targets of crime and threats at school, and this is more likely to be the case for middle or junior high school students than for high school students.

- Seventeen percent of middle or junior high school students reported being personally victimized, compared to 8 percent of senior high school students (table 1).

Bullying appears to take place more in middle or junior high schools than in high schools, and the difference between the percentages of students in those schools reporting victimization is largely attributable to that type of incident:

- Twelve percent of middle or junior high school students reported being bullied, double the percentage of senior high school students (table 2).

Differences between public and private schools. The type of school that a youth attended was also associated with the likelihood of exposure to crime or threats. Eighty-one percent of 6th- through 12th-grade students attended public schools to which they were assigned, 11 percent attended public schools chosen by the family, and 8 percent attended private schools. In general, students in public schools had more knowledge of and experience with crime and threats than children in private schools:

- Seventy-three percent of children in assigned public schools and 71 percent in public schools of choice reported knowledge of an occurrence of either bullying, physical attack, or robbery, compared to 45 percent of private school students (table 1).
- Public school students in both assigned and chosen schools were more likely to witness crime or threats personally at school and to worry about becoming a victim than were private school students.

However, only students in assigned public schools were significantly more likely than students in private schools to report that they had been directly victimized:

- Twelve percent of students in assigned public schools versus 7 percent of students in private schools said they had personally experienced

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crime or threats in their school during the current school year (table 1).

Differences did exist between students attending private school versus those attending either assigned or chosen public schools in their reports of personal victimization by physical attack.

- A greater percentage of public school students, 4 percent in both assigned and chosen public schools, reported being physically attacked at school than did private school students, 1 percent of whom reported such attacks (table 2).

Differences by school size. Students at larger schools are more likely than students at the smallest schools to be exposed to bullying, physical attack, or robbery. A greater percentage of students at schools containing 600 or more students than those attending schools of fewer than 300 students reported knowledge of crime or threats at school and witnessing crime. However,

- There was no difference in worry about crime or in actual victimization for students at larger schools.

Differences by school racial composition and student's race/ethnicity. Exposure to crime and threats at school crosses racial and ethnic boundaries. Overall, students' perceptions of the safety of their schools varied little by the student's race or ethnicity and the school racial composition. The majority of both black and white students in schools with varying racial compositions reported having heard about and having seen crime or threats (table 1):

- Worry and victimization also did not differ by student's race or school racial composition.

Differences by sex. Crime and threats at school affect both boys and girls. Seventy-one percent of male and 70 percent of female students reported knowing about bullying, physical attack, or robbery at school; witnessing these events and worrying about them also did not differ by the sex of the student (table 1). Male and female students did differ, however, when it came to having been personally victimized at school:

- Boys were more likely to be victimized than were girls (14 versus 9 percent, respectively).

Summary

Substantial percentages of U.S. students in the 6th through 12th grades face crime or threats at school or on the way to or from school. Seventy-one percent of students reported that bullying, physical attack, or robbery had happened at their schools; about one-quarter of students said that they worry about becoming victims of crime or threats at school, and about one student in eight was victimized at school. Exposure to dangerous or threatening behavior at school was most common for students attending middle or junior high schools, students at public schools, and students at larger schools.

Students exposed to crime or threats and worried about becoming victims at school are experiencing a learning environment that is seriously deficient. America needs to ensure that schools are communities of teachers and learners, where learning can take place in a secure environment.

Survey Methodology and Data Reliability

The 1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES:93) is a telephone survey conducted by Westat for the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Data collection took place from January through April of 1993. The sample is nationally representative of all civilian, noninstitutionalized persons in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This sample was selected using random digit dialing (RDD) methods, and the data were collected using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology.

The School Safety and Discipline (SS&D) component of the NHES:93, which is the basis of this report, included a sample of students in grades 3 through 12. Two instruments were used to collect data on the school experiences of these students. A household Screener, administered to an adult member of the household, was used to determine whether any children of the appropriate ages lived in the household, to collect information on each household member, and to identify the appropriate parent/guardian respondent. If one or two eligible children resided in the household, interviews were conducted about each child. If more than two eligible children resided in the household, two children were randomly sampled as interview subjects. For households with children who were sampled for the survey, SS&D interviews were conducted with the parent/guardian most knowledgeable about the care and education of each child. If an eligible youth resided in a household in which no adult was acting in a caretaking capacity for him or her, then that "emancipated" youth responded to the interview. A sample of youth in grades 6 through 12 was also interviewed following the completion of the parent interview about the child. This report was based on the responses of the students in grades 6 through 12.

Response Rates

For the NHES:93 survey, Screeners were completed with 63,844 households, of which 12,829 contained at least one child sampled for the SS&D component. The response rate for the Screener was 82 percent. The completion rate for the SS&D interview with parents of 6th- through 12th-grade students, or the percentage of interviews conducted with parents for sampled children in that grade range, was 90 percent, and the completion rate for the youth in grades 6 through 12 who were sampled was 83 percent. Thus, the overall response rate for the SS&D interview with parents of students in grades 6 through 12 was 74 percent (the product of the Screener response rate and the SS&D completion rate). For youth, the overall response rate was 68 percent. For the NHES:93, item nonresponse (the failure to complete some items in an otherwise completed interview) was very low. The item nonresponse rates for variables in this report are generally less than 2 percent for parents and 1 percent for youth. Items with missing data were imputed using a hot-deck procedure. As a result, no missing values remain.

Data Reliability

Estimates produced using data from the NHES:93 are subject to two types of error, sampling and nonsampling errors. Nonsampling errors are errors made in the collection and processing of data. Sampling errors occur because the data are collected from a sample rather than a census of the population.

Nonsampling errors. Nonsampling error is the term used to describe variations in the estimates that may be caused by population coverage limitations and data collection, processing, and reporting procedures. The sources of nonsampling errors are typically problems like unit and item nonresponse, the differences in respondents' interpretations of the meaning of the questions, response differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted, and mistakes in data preparation.

In general, it is difficult to identify and estimate either the amount of nonsampling error or the bias caused by this error. In the NHES:93 survey, efforts were made to prevent such errors from occurring and to compensate for them where possible. For instance, during the survey design phase, focus groups and cognitive laboratory interviews were conducted for the purpose of assessing respondent knowledge of the topics, comprehension of questions and terms, and the sensitivity of items. The design phase also entailed over 500 staff hours of CATI instrument testing and a pretest in which over 275 interviews were conducted.

An important nonsampling error for a telephone survey is the failure to include persons who do not live in households with telephones. About 92 percent of all students in grades 3 through 12 live in households with telephones. Estimation procedures were used to help reduce the bias in the estimates associated with children who do not live in telephone households.[8]

Sampling errors. The sample of telephone households selected for the NHES:93 is just one of many possible samples that could have been selected. Therefore, estimates produced from the NHES:93 sample may differ from estimates that would have been produced from other samples. This type of variability is called sampling error because it arises from using a sample of household with telephones, rather than all households with telephones.

The standard error is a measure of the variability due to sampling when estimating a statistic; standard errors for estimates presented in this report were computed using a jackknife replication method. Standard errors can be used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. The probability that a complete census count would differ from the sample estimate by less than one standard error is about 68 percent. The chance that the difference would be less than 1.65 standard errors is about 90 percent; and that the difference would be less than 1.96 standard errors, about 95 percent.

Standard errors for all of the estimates are presented in the tables. These standard errors can be used to produce confidence intervals. For example, an estimated 12 percent of students reported that they had been victimized at school. This figure has an estimated standard error of .7. Therefore, the estimated 95 percent confidence interval for this statistic is approximately 10.6 to 13.4 percent.

Statistical tests. The tests of significance used in this analysis are based on Student's *t* statistics. As the number of comparisons at the same significance level increases, it becomes more likely that at least one of the estimated differences will be significant merely by chance, that is, it will be erroneously identified as different from zero. Even when there is no statistical difference between the means or percentages being compared, there is a 5 percent chance of getting a significant *t* value of 1.96 from sampling error alone. As the number of comparisons increases, the chance of making this type of error also increases.

A Bonferroni adjustment was used to correct significance tests for multiple comparisons. This method adjusts the significance level for the total number of comparisons made with a particular classification variable. All the differences cited in this report are significant at the .05 level of significance after a Bonferroni adjustment.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to express their appreciation to the following reviewers of this report who provided valuable critique and suggestions: Marilyn McMillen of the Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics Division of NCES; Mike Cohen of the Statistical Standards and Methodology Division of NCES; John Ralph of the Data Development Division of NCES; Oliver Moles, OERI; Bruce Taylor, Bureau of Justice Statistics; and Edward D. Jonas, Jr., Atlanta Board of Education.

Endnotes

[1]Unpublished data, National Crime Victimization Survey, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of of Justice Statistics, 199.

[2]W. Mansfield, D. Alexander, and E. Farris, *Fast Response Survey System, Teacher Survey* on *Title, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools,* FRSS 42, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1991 (NCES 91–091).

[3]A total of 12,680 parents of students in grades 3 through 12 and 6,504 students in grades 6 through 12 were interviewed in the NHES:93.

[4]The survey data were weighted to the entire U.S. population of youth in grades 6 through 12 those youth living in households with telephones.

[5]The American Psychological Association, Violence and Youth: Psychologys Response Volume I: Summary Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on on Violence and Youth, 1993, p. 42.

[6]R.J. Hazier, J.H. Hoover, and R. Oliver, "What Kids Say About Bullying," *The Executive Educator,* November 1992, pp. 20–22.

[7]Elementary schools were defined as having a lowest grade of 3 or less and a highest grade of 8 or less. Middle or junior high school schools were defined as having a lowest arid a highest grade of 4 through 9. Senior high schools were defined as having a lowest grade of 7 through 12 and a highest grade 10 through 12. Schools that did not precisely meet these qualifications were classified as combined."

[8]For additional information on telephone coverage issues and (Estimation procedures to correct for coverage biases, see J.M. Brick and J. Burke, Telephone Coverage Bias of *14- to 21-year-olds air 3 to 5-year-olds.* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 (NCES 92–101).

Table 1.— Percentage of students reporting the occurrence of, witness of, worry about, or victimization through robbery, bullying, or physical attack at school,[1] by school and family characteristics: 1993

Characteristic	Number of students in grades 6 through 12 (thousands)	Crime or threats at school							
		Has occurred		Has witnessed		Worried about		Happened to him or her	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	24,060	71	2.0	56	2.2	25	1.2	12	0.7
School grade level[2]									
Elementary school	2,663	60	5.7	47	4.8	29	3.3	13	2.0
Middle or junior high school	7,418	77	3.0	60	2.5	34	1.8	17	1.1
Senior high school	11,539	71	1.1	58	1.3	20	0.8	8	0.6
Combined	2,440	60	7.2	45	5.6	19	2.9	11	1.7
School type[3]									
Public, assigned	19,507	73	1.8	58	2.0	26	1.1	12	0.8
Public, chosen	2,683	71	7.2	54	6.1	27	3.1	10	1.7
Private	1,870	45	2.9	32	2.3	13	1.6	7	1.1
School size[4]									
Under 300	2,632	58	5.8	44	4.2	21	3.3	10	1.8
300 - 599	7,820	68	3.3	53	4.5	27	2.2	13	1.3
600 - 999	6,176	74	1.3	59	1.4	25	1.2	12	0.9
1,000 or more	7,433	75	1.2	60	1.4	25	1.1	10	0.8
Student's race/ethnicity and school racial composition[5]									
White in mostly white school	9,598	70	1.9	54	2.9	22	1.4	10	0.9
White in racially mixed school	6,449	75	2.6	61	2.6	27	1.7	13	1.0
White in mostly nonwhite school	789	74	3.6	59	4.2	25	3.4	15	2.4
Black in mostly black school	1,055	70	3.4	56	3.3	27	3.0	10	1.8
Black in racially mixed school	1,958	68	7.3	55	6.3	29	3.5	11	2.4
Black in mostly nonblack school	814	69	4.2	56	4.5	22	3.8	14	3.0
Other race/ethnicity-school combination	3,399	64	6.5	48	4.8	26	4.9	12	3.2
Student's race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	16,835	72	2.0	57	2.6	24	1.3	12	0.7
Black, non-Hispanic	3,826	69	4.0	56	3.4	27	2.1	12	1.2
Hispanic	2,636	65	1.9	51	2.3	30	2.0	11	1.4
Other races	762	64	6.5	48	4.8	26	4.9	12	3.2
Sex									
Male	12,040	71	1.4	58	2.4	25	1.5	14	1.0
Female	12,020	70	3.0	54	2.3	26	1.3	9	0.7

[1]Includes school activities during the day and on the way to and from school.

[2]Schools were classified according to the lowest and highest grades at the school. Schools in which the lowest grade was 3 or less and the highest grade was 8 or less were classified as elementary. Middle or junior high schools were those that had a low grade of 4 through 9 and a high grade of 4 through 9. Senior high schools had a low grade of 7 through 12 and a high grade of 10 through 12. Schools that did not precisely meet these qualifications were classified as "combined."

[3]School type was defined by the parents of the students who were interviewed as an assigned public school, a public school that was chosen by the family, or a private school.

[4]School size was determined by the estimate of parents of students who were asked to choose from among the following four categories: under 300, 300 to 599, 600 to 999, or 1,000 or more. Parents who were only able to estimate the number of students in their child's grade were allowed to do so, and that answer was converted to size of school based upon the number of grades in the school.

[5]School racial composition was measured by parent reports. Schools were characterized as having more than 75 percent of students in the same racial/ethnic group as the child, between 25 and 75 percent, or less than 25 percent in the same racial/ethnic group.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Number of students may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

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Table 2.— Percentage of students reporting victimization at school,[1] by school and family characteristics: 1993

Characteristic	Number of students in grades 6 through 12 (thousands)	Type of incident					
		Bullying		Physical attack		Robbery	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	24,060	8	0.5	4	0.4	1	0.2
School grade level[2]							
Elementary school	2,663	10	1.6	4	1.0	1	0.4
Middle or junior high school	7,418	12	0.8	5	0.7	2	0.3
Senior high school	11,539	6	0.5	3	0.4	1	0.2
Combined	2,440	9	1.4	3	0.9	1	0.4
School type[3]							
Public, assigned	19,507	9	0.5	4	0.4	1	0.2
Public, chosen	2,683	8	1.4	4	1.0	1	0.4
Private	1,870	5	1.1	1	0.5	*	0.3
School size[4]							
Under 300	2,632	7	1.4	4	1.0	*	0.2
300 - 599	7,820	10	1.0	4	0.6	1	0.3
600 - 999	6,176	8	0.8	3	0.6	1	0.3
1,000 or more	7,433	7	0.7	4	0.5	1	0.2
Student's race/ethnicity and school racial composition[5]							
White in mostly white school	9,598	8	0.7	3	0.5	1	0.1
White in racially mixed school	6,449	10	0.8	4	0.6	2	0.3
White in mostly nonwhite school	789	9	2.2	5	1.7	3	1.2
Black in mostly black school	1,055	8	1.7	3	1.1	1	0.4
Black in racially mixed school	1,958	6	1.5	5	1.7	1	0.6
Black in mostly nonblack school	814	9	2.7	5	2.0	2	1.1
Other race/ethnicity-school combination	3,399	7	1.0	4	0.8	2	0.5
Student's race/ethnicity							
White, non-Hispanic	16,835	9	0.5	3	0.4	1	0.2
Black, non-Hispanic	3,826	7	0.9	5	1.0	1	0.4
Hispanic	2,636	6	0.8	4	0.9	2	0.5
Other races	762	9	2.7	3	1.5	1	0.6
Sex							
Male	12,040	10	0.7	5	0.6	1	0.2
Female	12,020	7	0.6	2	0.3	1	0.2

*Less than 0.5 percent.

[1]Includes school activities during the day and on the way to or from school.

[2]Schools were classified according to the lowest and highest grades at the school. Schools in which the lowest grade was 3 or less and the highest grade was 8 or less were classified as elementary. Middle or junior high schools were those that had a low grade of 4 through 9 and a high grade of 4 through 9. Senior high schools had a low grade of 7 through 12 and a high grade of 10 through 12. Schools that did not precisely meet these qualifications were classified as "combined."

[3]School type was defined by the parents of the students who were interviewed as an assigned public school, a public school that was chosen by the family, or a private school.

[4]School size was determined by the estimate of parents of students who were asked to choose from among the following four categories: under 300, 300 to 599, 600 to 999, or 1,000 or more. Parents who were only able to estimate the number of students in their child's grade were allowed to do so, and that answer was converted to size of school based upon the number of grades in the school.

[5]School racial composition was measured by parent reports. Schools were characterized as having more than 75 percent of students in the same racial/ethnic group as the child, between 25 and 75 percent, or less than 25 percent in the same racial/ethnic group.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Number of students may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Statistics in Brief October 1995

Student Strategies To Avoid Harm at School

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Ideally, schools should be havens where students and teachers can engage in activities related to learning free of concern about personal safety. In reality, today's schools are touched by the violence that is widespread in society. Students are exposed to crime or threats to personal safety at school, at school-related activities during the day, or on the way to or from school, and a small but unacceptable percentage of students are victimized at school.[1] In an effort to increase the safety of students at school, one of the National Education Goals states that, "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning," and measures to increase safety at school have been proposed in many schools and jurisdictions. However, until the conditions in our schools improve, students must take what steps they can to ensure their own safety.

This report presents information from a national survey of 6th- through 12th-grade students on student strategies to avoid harm at school. The data are from the 1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES:93) conducted by Westat for the National Center for Education Statistics. This report is based upon the responses of the 6,504 students in grades 6 through 12 who were surveyed.[2] Weights were applied to make the survey estimates applicable to the entire population of children in grades 6 through 12.[3]

Student Use of Strategies to Avoid Harm at School

The NHES:93 results suggest that unsafe conditions at school are not uncommon. About half of 6th- through 12th-grade students personally witnessed bullying, robbery, or physical assault at school, and about 1 out of 8 students reported being directly victimized at school.[4] Threats or crime at school may motivate students to develop strategies to avoid harm. In the NHES:93, students were asked to report the types of strategies that they used to avoid trouble at school or on the way to or from school during the 1992–93 school year. Data were collected from January through April 1993. Specifically, students reported on whether they ever took a special route to get to school, avoided certain places in the school building, avoided places on the school grounds, stayed away from school-related events, stayed in a group while at school, or skipped school because they were worried someone might hurt or bother them.

One-half of 6th- through 12th-grade students indicated that they do not use any strategy to avoid trouble at school, the other half reported using a single strategy or a combination of strategies. Twenty percent of students said that they tried to stay in a group while at school, but did not report using any other strategy to avoid harm, and 5 percent resorted to a single strategy other than staying in a group (figure 1).

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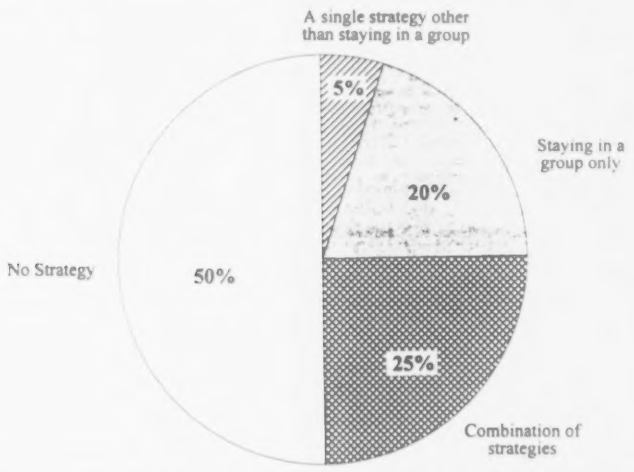
Figure 1.—Sixth- through twelfth- graders' reports of the use of strategies to avoid trouble at school: 1993



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

Use of Strategies to Avoid Harm at School, by School and Student Characteristics

School grade level, school type, and the racial/ethnic composition of the school relative to the student's own race/ethnicity were associated with students' reports of using some strategy to avoid difficulty atschool. As might be expected, safety at school also had an impact.

Differences by school grade level. Senior high school students were less likely than students attending either elementary or middle or junior high schools to report using one or more of the strategies measured in this survey. Only 43 percent of senior high school students but 58 percent of 6th- through 12th-grade students attending elementary school and 60 percent attending middle or junior high schools said they used some strategy (table 1). It is worth noting that only 11 percent of students in grades 6 through 12 attended an elementary school. According to the definition used in this report, elementary and middle or junior high school students would, on average, be younger than high school students.[5] Thus, age of student may be a confounding factor in the findings about school grade level.

Differences by school type. Resorting to a strategy to avoid harm or harassment at school is more common for students attending public schools than for those attending private schools, and there is a significant difference between students at public schools to which they were assigned and those at public schools chosen by the family.

- More than half of students at public schools of choice reported strategies (57 percent) versus 50 percent of students at assigned public schools and only 31 percent of students at private schools (table 1).

Public schools chosen by the family, attended by 11 percent of 6th- through 12th-grade students, may be in areas that are perceived as less safe than other schools, which may account for some of the difference. The programs offered by magnet schools, for instance, may attract students and their parents despite requiring youths to travel to less familiar surroundings. This distance, in itself, would possibly warrant extra caution on the part of students.

Differences by student's race/ethnicity and school racial composition. White students were less likely than black students or Hispanic students to report use of any strategy to avoid harm at school.

- Forty-five percent of white students versus 60 percent of black students and 62 percent of Hispanic students said that they used one or more strategies (table 1).

When the racial composition of the school is taken into account for white and black students, it was white students attending schools in which most of the other students were also white who were less

likely to report the use of a strategy to avoid harm at school as compared to black students in schools of any racial composition.

Differences by school safety. As would be expected, any encounter with victimization at school increases the likelihood that students will use some strategy to try to avoid harm. Students who know that incidents of bullying, robbery, or physical assault have taken place at their schools or students who have witnessed these events were more likely to report using one or more strategies to avoid such incidents. About three-quarters of students who either worry about being victimized at school or who have been victimized reported using one or more strategies to avoid harm (table 1).

Use of Specific Strategies to Avoid Harm at School by School and Student Characteristics

Whether a single strategy or part of a combination of ways to increase safety at school, staying in a group was the most commonly reported, by 41 percent of students (table 2). Twenty percent of students opted to stay away from certain places in the school building. Relatively few students (5 percent) chose to take a special route to get to school or to skip school (7 percent). Choice of specific strategy varied by some school and student characteristics.

Differences by school grade level. The use of specific kinds of strategies to avoid harm was related to school grade level.

- One-quarter of middle or junior high school children reported that they deliberately stay away from certain places in the school compared with 17 percent of high school students who used this strategy (table 2).
- Both elementary and middle or junior high school students were more likely to stay away from places on school grounds, take a special route to get to school, and stay in a group than were senior high school students.

Differences by school type. The reports of public school students and private school students were also distinct regarding specific avoidance strategies. For example:

- Twenty-one percent of students at assigned public schools and 24 percent of students at chosen public schools reported deliberately staying away from certain places in school compared to 5 percent of private school students (table 2).

In fact, higher percentages of students at both assigned and chosen public schools than at private schools reported using all types of avoidance strategies.

Differences by student's race/ethnicity and school racial composition. While the NHES:93 found that the incidence and types of victimization varied little by race/ethnicity and school racial composition, some strategies used by students to avoid trouble were different for black and white students in schools of various racial compositions. To illustrate:

- Nine percent of black students in mostly black schools and 10 percent of black students in racially mixed schools took a special route to get to school, nearly 5 times the percentage of white children in mostly white schools that reported this strategy (table 2).
- Black students in mostly black schools and black students in racially mixed schools were also more likely to stay away from certain places in the school than were white students in mostly white schools.
- Eight percent of white students in mostly white schools stayed away from certain places on the school grounds compared to 26 percent of black students in mostly black schools and 19 percent of black students in mostly nonblack schools.

Student choice of specific strategy by race/ethnicity also revealed some significant differences. For example:

- Only 3 percent of white students took a special route to get to school versus 8 percent of black students and 10 percent of Hispanic students (table 2).
- While 10 percent of black students and 11 percent of Hispanic students reported they sometimes stayed home from school because they worried about harm, 5 percent of white students said they did so.

Black and Hispanic students were also more likely than white students to stay away from certain places in the school, to stay away from places on the school grounds, and to stay away from school-related events.

Summary

Wary of potential danger, approximately half of 6th- through 12th-grade students employ strategies to help them avoid harm, most commonly staying in a group while at school or avoiding certain places in the school. White students attending schools in which most of the students are white were less likely to report using a strategy than were black students, regardless of the racial composition of their schools. There is a striking difference in reported use of strategies between students at private schools and students at public schools, with a lower percentage

of private school students than public school students reporting the use of any strategy to avoid harm at school. Students who must think about avoiding harm at school are diverting energy that should be expended on learning. Improving students' safety at school will enable American youth to redirect their concerns to school work and student activities.

Survey Methodology and Data Reliability

The 1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES:93) is a telephone survey conducted by Westat for the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Data collection took place from January through April of 1993. The sample is nationally representative of all civilian, noninstitutionalized persons in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This sample was selected using random digit dialing (RDD) methods, and the data were collected using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology.

The School Safety and Discipline (SS&D) component of the NHES:93, which is the basis of this report, included a sample of students in grades 3 through 12. Two instruments were used to collect data on the school experiences of these students. A household Screener, administered to an adult member of the household, was used to determine whether any children of the appropriate ages lived in the household, to collect information on each household member, and to identify the appropriate parent/guardian respondent. If one or two eligible children resided in the household, interviews were conducted about each child. If more than two eligible children resided in the household, two children were randomly sampled as interview subjects. For households with children who were sampled for the survey, SS&D interviews were conducted with the parent/guardian most knowledgeable about the care and education of each child. If an eligible youth resided in a household in which no adult was acting in a caretaking capacity for him or her, then that "emancipated" youth responded to the interview. A sample of youth in grades 6 through 12 was also interviewed following the completion of the parent interview about the child. This report was based on the responses of students in grades 6 through 12.

Response Rates

For the NHES:93 survey, Screeners were completed with 63,844 households, of which 12,829 contained at least one child sampled for the SS&D component. The response rate for the Screener was 82 percent. The completion rate for the SS&D interview with parents of 6th- through 12th-grade students, or the percentage of interviews conducted with parents for sampled children in that grade range, was 90 percent, and the completion rate for the youth in grades 6 through 12 who were sampled was 83 percent. Thus, the overall response rate for the SS&D interview with parents of students in grades 6 through 12 was 74 percent (the product of the Screener response rate and the SS&D completion rate). For youth, the overall response rate was 68 percent. For the NHES:93, item nonresponse (the failure to complete some items in an otherwise completed interview) was very low. The item nonresponse rates for variables in this report are generally less than 2 percent for parents and 1 percent for youth. Items with missing data were imputed using a hot-deck procedure. As a result, no missing values remain.

Data Reliability

Estimates produced using data from the NHES:93 are subject to two types of error, sampling and nonsampling errors. Nonsampling errors are errors made in the collection and processing of data. Sampling errors occur because the data are collected from a sample rather than a census of the population.

Nonsampling errors. Nonsampling error is the term used to describe variations in the estimates that may be caused by population coverage limitations and data collection, processing, and reporting procedures. The sources of nonsampling errors are typically problems like unit and item nonresponse, the differences in respondents' interpretations of the meaning of the questions, response differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted, and mistakes in data preparation.

In general, it is difficult to identify and estimate either the amount of nonsampling error or the bias caused by this error. In the NHES:93 survey, efforts were made to prevent such errors from occurring and to compensate for them where possible. For instance, during the survey design phase, focus groups and cognitive laboratory interviews were conducted for the purpose of assessing respondent knowledge of the topics, comprehension of questions and terms, and the sensitivity of items. The design phase also entailed over 500 staff hours of CATI instrument testing and a pretest in which over 275 interviews were conducted.

An important nonsampling error for a telephone survey is the failure to include persons who do not live in households with telephones. About 92 percent of all students in grades 3 through 12 live in households with telephones. Estimation procedures were used to help reduce the bias in the estimates associated with children who do not live in telephone households.

Sampling errors. The sample of telephone households selected for the NHES:93 is just one of many possible samples that could have been selected. Therefore, estimates produced from the NHES:93 sample may differ from estimates that would have been produced from other samples. This type of variability is called sampling error because it arises from using a sample of household with telephones, rather than all households with telephones.

The standard error is a measure of the variability due to sampling when estimating a statistic; standard errors for estimates presented in this report were computed using a jackknife replication method. Standard errors can be used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. The probability that a complete census count would differ from the sample estimate by less than one standard error is about 68 percent. The chance tnat the difference would be less than 1.65 standard errors is about 90 percent; and that the difference would be less than 1.96 standard errors, about 95 percent.

Standard errors for all of the estimates are presented in the tables. These standard errors can be used to produce confidence intervals. For example, an estimated 5 percent of students reported that they took a special route to get to school. This figure has an estimated standard error of .5. Therefore, the estimated 95 percent confidence interval for this statistic is approximately 4 to 6 percent.

Statistical tests. The tests of significance used in this analysis are based on Student's *t* statistics. As the number of comparisons at the same significance level increases, it becomes more likely that at least one of the estimated differences will be significant merely by chance, that is, it will be erroneously identified as different from zero. Even when there is no statistical difference between the means or percentages being compared, there is a 5 percent chance of getting a significant *t* value of 1.96 from sampling error alone. As the number of comparisons increases, the chance of making this type of error also increases.

A Bonferroni adjustment was used to correct significance tests for multiple comparisons. This method adjusts the significance level for the total number of comparisons made with a particular classification variable. All the differences cited in this report are significant at the .05 level of significance after a Bonferroni adjustment.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the following people who reviewed this report and provided helpful critique and suggestions: Marilyn McMillen of the Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics Division of NCES; Mike Cohen of the Statistical Standards and Methodology Division of NCES; John Ralph of the Data Development Division of NCES; Oliver Moles, OERI; Bruce Taylor, Bureau of Justice Statistics; and Edward D. Jonas, Jr., Atlanta Board of Education.

Endnotes

[1]Nolin, M.J., Davies, E., and Chandler, K. *Student Victimization at School* forthcoming).

[2]A total of 12,690 parents of students in grades 3 through 12 and 6,504 students in grades 6 through 12 were interviewed in the NHES:93.

*3*The survey data were weighted to the entire U.S. population of youth in grades 6 through 12, not only those youth living in households with telephones.

[4]Nolin, M.J., Davies, E., and Chandler, K. *Student Victimization at* School(forthcoming).

[5]Elementary schools were defined as having a lowest grade of 3 or less and a highest grade of 8 or less Middle or junior high school schools were defined as having a lowest and a highest grade of 4 through 9. Senior high schools were defined as having a lowest grade of 7 through 12 and a highest grade of 10 through 12. Schools that did not precisely meet these qualifications were classified as "combined."

[6]For additional information on telephone coverage issues and estimation procedures to correct for cove-rage biases see J. M. Brick and J. Burke, Telephone Coverage Bias of 14- to 21-year-olds and 3- to 5- *year-olds*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, report number NCES 92-101.

Table 1.— Percentage of students reporting the use of any strategy to avoid harm at school,[1] by school and student characteristics: 1993

Characteristic	Number of students in grades 6 through 12 (thousands)	Some strategy or combination of strategies used		No strategy used	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	24,060	50	0.8	50	0.8
School grade level[2]					
Elementary school	2,663	58	3.1	42	3.1
Middle or junior high school	7,418	60	1.5	40	1.5
Senior high school1	1,539	43	1.2	57	1.2
Combined	2,440	40	5.3	60	5.3
School type[3]					
Public, assigned	19,507	50	0.9	50	0.9
Public, chosen	2,683	57	2.1	43	2.1
Private	1,870	31	2.0	69	2.0
School size[4]					
Under 300	2,632	46	2.8	54	2.8
300 - 599	7,820	50	1.6	50	1.6
600 - 999	6,176	50	1.8	50	1.8
1,000 or more	7,433	50	1.4	50	1.4
Student's race/ethnicity and school racial composition[5]					
White in mostly white school	9,598	43	1.8	57	1.8
White in racially mixed school	6,449	48	1.6	52	1.6
White in mostly nonwhite school	789	46	4.4	54	4.4
Black in mostly black school	1,055	59	2.9	41	2.9
Black in racially mixed school	1,958	61	4.2	39	4.2
Black in mostly nonblack school	814	60	4.0	40	4.0
Other race/ethnicity-school combination	3,399	61	2.1	39	2.1
Student's race/ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	16,835	45	1.2	55	1.2
Black, non-Hispanic	3,826	60	2.4	40	2.4
Hispanic	2,636	62	2.2	38	2.2
Other races	762	56	7.3	44	7.3
Sex					
Male	12,040	49	1.0	51	1.0
Female	12,020	50	1.1	50	1.1
Knows of incidents					
Yes	17,002	56	1.1	44	1.1
No	7,058	35	2.2	65	2.2
Witnessed incidents					
Yes	13,425	57	0.9	43	0.9
No	10,636	40	1.1	60	1.1
Worried about being victimized					
Yes	6,045	78	1.2	22	1.2
No	18,015	40	0.8	60	0.8
Victimized					
Yes	2,784	74	2.2	26	2.2
No	21,276	47	0.8	53	0.8

[1]Includes school activities during the day and on the way to or from school.

[2]Schools were classified according to the lowest and highest grades at the school. Schools in which the lowest grade was 3 or less and the highest grade was 8 or less were classified as elementary. Middle or junior high schools were those that had a low grade of 4 through 9 and a high grade of 4 through 9. Senior high schools had a low grade of 7 through 12 and a high grade of 10 through 12. Schools that did not precisely meet these qualifications were classified as "combined."

[3]School type was defined by the parents of the students who were interviewed as an assigned public school, a public school that was chosen by the family, or a private school.

[4]School size was determined by the estimate of parents of students who were asked to choose from among the following four categories: under 300, 300 to 599, 600 to 999, or 1,000 or more. Parents who were only able to estimate the number of students in their child's grade were allowed to do so, and that answer was converted to size of school based upon the number of grades in the school.

[5]School racial composition was measured by parent reports. Schools were characterized as having more than 75 percent of students in the same racial/ethnic group as the child, between 25 and 75 percent, or less than 25 percent in the same racial/ethnic group.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Number of students may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

Table 2.— Percentage of students reporting specific strategies to avoid harm at school,[1] by school and student characteristics: 1993

Characteristic	Number of students in grades 6 through 12 (thousands)	Strategies: Take special route to get to school		Stay away from certain places in the school		Stay away from places on school grounds		Stay away from school-related events		Stay in a group at school		Stay home sometimes	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	24,060	5	0.5	20	0.6	14	0.6	8	0.6	41	0.9	7	0.5
School grade level[2]													
Elementary school	2,663	7	1.4	21	4.2	22	2.6	8	1.7	50	3.8	8	1.3
Middle or junior high school	7,418	7	0.8	25	1.4	18	2.5	9	0.7	49	1.7	8	0.9
Senior high school	11,539	3	0.4	17	0.8	10	0.5	7	0.6	36	1.0	6	0.5
Combined	2,440	4	1.1	15	2.5	10	1.8	8	1.7	33	4.3	6	1.4
School type[3]													
Public, assigned	19,507	5	0.5	21	1.0	14	0.8	8	0.6	42	0.7	7	0.6
Public, chosen	2,683	6	1.1	24	3.2	18	2.6	10	1.7	45	4.9	7	1.3
Private	1,870	2	0.7	5	0.8	4	0.9	3	1.0	27	2.0	2	0.5
School size[4]													
Under 300	2,632	3	0.9	15	4.0	12	2.4	6	1.6	37	3.3	6	1.2
300 - 599	7,820	5	0.8	20	1.8	15	1.7	8	1.0	42	1.1	6	0.8
600 - 999	6,176	5	0.7	21	1.0	13	1.0	8	0.7	42	1.5	8	0.9
1,000 or more	7,433	4	0.5	21	1.2	13	0.8	8	0.8	41	1.2	8	0.6
Student's race/ethnicity and school racial composition[5]													
White in mostly white school	9,598	2	0.4	13	1.0	8	0.8	6	0.7	37	1.5	4	0.5
White in racially mixed school	6,449	4	0.6	21	1.9	12	1.0	6	0.7	40	2.2	6	0.7
White in mostly nonwhite school	789	3	1.1	19	3.0	13	2.8	9	2.6	38	3.9	10	2.6
Black in mostly black school	1,055	9	2.1	31	3.3	26	3.6	12	2.5	42	3.3	8	1.9
Black in racially mixed school	1,958	10	2.2	32	4.7	24	8.6	11	2.4	48	6.0	10	2.2
Black in mostly nonblack school	814	5	1.8	23	3.9	19	3.0	9	2.2	47	3.6	13	3.4
Other race/ethnicity-school combination	3,399	8	1.1	27	1.8	24	1.6	13	1.3	49	2.0	11	1.2
Student's race/ethnicity													
White, non-Hispanic	16,835	3	0.4	16	0.7	10	0.7	6	0.5	38	1.6	5	0.4
Black, non-Hispanic	3,826	8	1.4	30	3.0	24	4.3	11	1.5	46	3.5	10	1.6
Hispanic	2,636	10	1.2	28	1.9	25	1.9	13	1.4	50	2.6	11	1.3
Other races	762	5	1.6	26	4.1	21	3.3	13	2.3	46	5.7	11	2.8
Sex													
Male	12,040	5	0.6	19	1.3	14	1.5	8	0.8	40	1.0	6	0.6
Female	12,020	4	0.6	21	0.9	13	0.9	7	0.6	42	1.5	8	0.7

[1]Includes school activities during the day and on the way to or from school.

[2]Schools were classified according to the lowest and highest grades at the school. Schools in which the lowest grade was 3 or less and the highest grade was 8 or less were classified as elementary. Middle or junior high schools were those that had a low grade of 4 through 9 and a high grade of 4 through 9. Senior high school had a low grade of 7 through 12 and a high grade of 10 through 12. Schools that did not precisely meet these qualifications were classified as "combined."

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[4]School size was determined by the estimate of parents of students who were asked to choose from among the following four categories: under 300, 300 to 599, 600 to 999, or 1,000 or more. Parents who were only able to estimate the number of students in their child's grade were allowed to do so, and that answer was converted to size of school based upon the number of grades in the school.

[5]School racial composition was measured by parent reports. Schools were characterized as having more than 75 percent of students in the same racial/ethnic group as the child, between 25 and 75 percent, or less than 25 percent in the same racial/ethnic group.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Number of students may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1993.

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ISSUE BRIEF

How Safe Are the Public Schools: What Do Teachers Say?

APRIL 1996
IB-4-96

The nation's seventh education goal for the year 2000 aims to ensure safe schools for all students. This goal is a crucial one, as safe schools are important for the achievement of all other national and local education goals (National Education Goals Panel 1994).

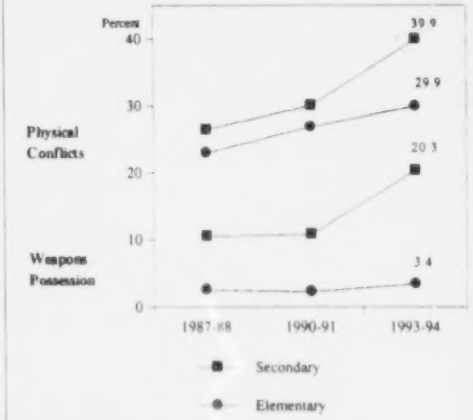
Recent public opinion surveys have found that for the majority of Americans, violence in the schools is the number one education-related concern (e.g., Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup 1994). In addition, a survey of students in public school grades 3 through 12 and their parents (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company 1993) disclosed disturbing reports and fears related to violent episodes on school campuses. In light of the views of students, their parents, and the public on conditions relating to school safety, what do teachers think about safety-related problems affecting their schools? The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), provides this perspective.

In 1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94, SASS presented teachers in public schools throughout the country with a list of school-related problems and asked for ratings of their severity in their schools. This brief examines two safety-related matters, physical conflicts among students and weapons possession, and presents the percentages of public school teachers who considered these matters as moderate or serious in their schools.*

From 1987-88 to 1993-94, increasing percentages of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools reported physical conflicts among students as moderate or serious problems in their schools.

From 1987-88 to 1990-91, the percentage of public secondary school teachers reporting physical conflicts among students as either moderate or serious problems in their schools increased from approximately 26 percent to nearly 30 percent (figure 1). From 1990-91 to 1993-94, this percentage increased from about 30 percent to nearly 40 percent. In addition, public elementary school teachers increasingly reported physical conflicts as moderate or serious problems over this same period, with almost 30 percent making these reports in 1993-94. In each year, secondary school teachers perceived physical conflicts as moderate or serious problems more frequently than did elementary teachers.

Figure 1. Percentages of public elementary and secondary school teachers reporting physical conflicts among students and weapons possession as moderate or serious problems in their schools: 1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (School and Teacher Questionnaires).

The percentages of public secondary school teachers reporting weapons possession as a moderate or serious problem in their schools nearly doubled from 1990-91 to 1993-94.

The percentages of public secondary school teachers reporting weapons possession as a moderate or serious problem remained much the same from 1987-88 to 1990-91; however, these reports almost doubled from 1990-91 to 1993-94—from almost 11 percent to about 20 percent (figure 1). In each year, secondary school teachers reported weapons

* Teachers were provided with four response options: "Not a problem," "Minor," "Moderate," or "Serious."

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possession as a moderate or serious problem more frequently than did elementary teachers. The percentage of elementary teachers citing this problem also showed an increase for the same years, rising from 2.2 percent in 1990-91 to 3.4 percent in 1993-94. In the case of weapons possession, any concern expressed is a serious matter. In 1987-88, 42.6 percent of secondary and 19.7 percent of elementary teachers reported weapons possession as a *minor* problem. These percentages for public secondary and elementary teachers, respectively, were 46.5 percent and 22.2 percent for 1990-91; for 1993-94, they were 56.6 percent and 30.6 percent.

From 1987-88 to 1993-94, teachers in public schools with more than 750 students consistently reported physical conflicts among students and weapons possession as moderate or serious problems more frequently than did teachers in schools with fewer than 150 students.

In the 1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94 school years, just about twice the percentage of elementary teachers in large public schools (i.e., schools with more than 750 students) reported these problems as did their counterparts in small schools (i.e., schools with fewer than 150 students) (table 1). A similar pattern over time can be seen at the secondary level. In addition, at both the elementary and secondary levels in 1993-94, the percentages of teachers who cited weapons possession as a moderate or serious problem in their schools were at least three times higher in large versus small schools.

Table 1. Percentages of public school teachers reporting physical conflicts among students and weapons possession as moderate or serious problems in their schools, by school size and level: 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94

	<150 students		>750 students	
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary
1987–88				
Physical conflicts	13.6	18.1	28.9	30.5
Weapons possession	1.3	7.1	5.1	14.0
1990–91				
Physical conflicts	16.1	15.3	32.1	35.2
Weapons possession	1.3	4.7	2.9	14.2
1993–94				
Physical conflicts	19.9	18.8	37.6	47.4
Weapons possession	1.9	8.6	5.7	26.5

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (School and Teacher Questionnaires).

Discussion

SASS data related to these two school safety issues suggest that in the opinions of teachers, public schools were less safe in 1993-94 than they were in 1987-88 or in 1990-91. At both the elementary and secondary levels, teacher reports of physical conflicts among students and weapons possession were at their highest levels in 1993-94. Although more frequently reported at the secondary level over time, these problems were cited more often in large versus small schools at both levels. Analyses of these data also raise important questions for research and practice. Which attributes of schools, particularly those with large enrollments, seem related to greater incidence of reported safety-related problems? Are there fewer adults in these large schools who are available to meet with and informally discuss things with students? How can teachers and other school staff take action to develop more positive relationships among themselves, students, and their families? How safe are private schools in the opinions of their teachers? These and other questions await researchers interested in exploring the SASS databases from NCES.

References and Related Publications

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Issue Briefs present information on education topics of current interest. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences are statistically significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error. For additional details on SASS data collection methods and definitions, see the following U.S. Department of Education publications: *Schools and Staffing Survey: Sample Design and Estimation* (NCES Report Nos. 91-127, 93-449, and forthcoming) and *Quality Profile for SASS: Aspects of the Quality of Data in the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS)* (NCES Report No. 94-340).

This **Issue Brief** was prepared by Robert Rossi and Shannon Daugherty, American Institutes for Research. To obtain standard errors or definitions of terms for this **Issue Brief**, or to obtain additional information about the Schools and Staffing Survey, contact Charles H. Hammer (202) 219–1330. To order additional copies of this **Issue Brief** or other NCES publications, call 1–800–424–1616.

NCES 96-842

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Resources

Resources

Federal Clearinghouses

The Federal Government funds a variety of clearinghouses. Each clearinghouse usually deals with a specific topic (e.g., drug abuse, delinquency) or Federal agency. These clearinghouses distribute a variety of materials: program models, grant information, research and evaluation findings, newsletters, and funding announcements. Clearinghouses can usually refer callers to other Federal clearinghouses and to non-Federal foundations and associations dealing with the same subject matter.

Housing and Urban Development
Drug Information and Strategy Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6424
Rockville, MD 20849
Telephone: 800-578-3472
301-251-5222
Fax: 301-251-5767

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20847
Telephone: 800-729-6686
301-468-2600
Fax: 301-468-6433

Child Abuse and Neglect Clearinghouse

3998 Fair Ridge Dr., Suite 350
Fairfax, VA 22033
Telephone: 800-394-3366
703-385-7565
Fax: 703-385-3206

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)

P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20850
Telephone: 800-851-3420
Fax: 301-251-5212

NCJRS serves as a single point of contact for the following offices:

- ❑ Bureau of Justice Assistance
- ❑ Bureau of Justice Statistics
- ❑ National Institute of Justice
- ❑ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- ❑ Office of National Drug Control Policy
- ❑ Office for Victims of Crime

[NCJRS also has electronic resources, which can be found in the section on Federal Online Services.]

Federally Funded Resource Centers

Selected listing of centers dealing with youth and crime/violence prevention:

Regional Educational Laboratories

Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University
222 Richmond Street, Suite 300
Providence, RI 02903-4226
Telephone: 401-274-9548
401-421-7650
800-521-9550
States Served: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands

Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success
Temple University/Center for Research in Human Development and Education
933 Ritter Annex, 13th St. and Cecil B. Moore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Telephone: 215-204-3030
800-892-5550
Fax: 215-204-5130
States Served: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
Telephone: 304-347-0400
800-624-9120
Fax: 304-347-0487
States Served: Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia

Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
201 Ferguson Building
Greensboro, NC 27403
Telephone: 910-334-3211
800-755-3277
Fax: 910-334-3268
States Served: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Oak Brook, IL 60521-1480
Telephone: 630-571-4700
800-356-2735
Fax: 630-571-4716
States Served: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701-3281
Telephone: 512-476-6861
800-476-6861
Fax: 512-476-2286
States Served: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory
2550 S. Parker Road, Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014
Telephone: 303-337-0990
Fax: 303-337-3005
States Served: Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming

Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development
and the Southwest Regional Laboratory
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
Telephone: 415-565-3000
Fax: 415-565-3012
States Served: Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Telephone: 503-275-9500
800-547-6339
Fax: 503-275-9489
States Served: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington

Pacific Region Educational Laboratory
828 Fort Street Mall, Suite 500
Honolulu, HI 96813-4321
Telephone: 808-533-6000
Fax: 808-533-7599
States Served: American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau

Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers

These centers, funded by the Department of Education, offer technical assistance across a broad range of educational topics, including safe and drug-free schools.

Region I: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158-1060
Telephone: 617-969-7100, ext.2310
Fax: 617-332-4318

Region II: New York State

New York University
New York Technical Assistance Center
82 Washington Square East, Suite 72
New York, NY 10003-6644
Telephone: 212-998-5110
Fax: 212-995-4199/4041

Region III: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC

George Washington University
1730 North Lynn Street, Suite 401
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 703-528-3588
Fax: 703-528-5973

Region IV: Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina , Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
Telephone: 304-347-0441
Fax: 304-347-0489

Region V: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi

Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center
3330 Causeway Boulevard, Suite 430
Metairie, LA 70002-3573
Telephone: 504-838-6861
Fax: 504-831-5242

Region VI: Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

1025 West Johnson Street
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706
Telephone: 608-263-4326
Fax: 608-263-3733

Region VII: Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma

University of Oklahoma
100 ASP, Room 210
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone: 405-325-1711
Fax: 405-325-1824

Region VIII: Texas

Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
Telephone: 210-684-8180
Fax: 210-684-5389

Region IX: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah

New Mexico Highlands University
121 Tijeras, NE, Suite 2100
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Telephone: 505-242-7447
Fax: 505-242-7558

Region X: Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 Southwest Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Telephone: 503-275-9479
Fax: 503-275-9625

Region XI: Northern California

Far West Laboratory for Educational Research
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
Telephone: 415-565-3009
Fax: 415-565-3012/2024

Region XII: Southern California

Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242-2890
Telephone: 310-922-6319
Fax: 310-922-6699

Region XIII: Alaska

South East Regional Resource Center
210 Ferry Way, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801
Telephone: 907-586-6806
Fax: 907-463-3811

Region XIV: Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Educational Testing Service
1979 Lake Side Parkway, Suite 400
Tucker, GA 30084
Telephone: 770-723-7443
Fax: 770-723-7436

Region XV: American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau

Pacific Region Educational Laboratory
828 Fort Street Mall, Suite 500
Honolulu, HI 96813
Telephone: 808-533-6000
Fax: 808-533-7599

Other Resource Centers

Families, Communities, and Schools

Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning
Boston University
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
Telephone: 617-353-3309
Fax: 617-353-8444

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard
Suite 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362
Telephone: 805-373-9977
Fax. 805-373-9277

National Resource Center for Family Support Programs
Family Resource Coalition
200 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Telephone: 312-341-0900
Fax: 312-341-9361

Victims

National Resource Center on Child Abuse and Neglect
American Humane Association
Children's Division
63 Inverness Drive East
Englewood, CO 80112-5117
Telephone: 800-227-5242
303-792-9900
Fax: 303-792-5333

Crime Prevention

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006
Telephone: 202-466-6272
Fax: 202-296-1356

For a complete listing of federally funded Resource Centers contact:
National Center for Service Integration Clearinghouse
c/o Child and Family Policy Center
128 6th Avenue
Fleming Building, Suite 1021
Des Moines, IA 50309
Telephone: 515-280-9027
Fax: 515-244-8997

Federal Online Services

The Federal Government funds several online services that include information on youth crime prevention and youth development. These services are available through the Internet.

PAVNET

A cooperative online effort of several departments, PAVNET lists over 550 specific Federal, local, and private programs and initiatives that deal with violence prevention.

via gopher: pavnet.esusda.gov
PAVNET can also be accessed through the NCJRS electronic services (see below).
PAVNET User's Guide is available through NCJRS at 800-851-3420.
Access is free of charge.

PREVLINE

Managed by NCADI (see page 121) and funded by HHS, PREVLINE has information and materials on alcohol and drug abuse, conferences, grant announcements, keynote speeches, and press releases; provides forums and electronic mail for exchange of ideas and topics by prevention professionals.

via modem: 301-770-0850
via telnet: ncadi.health.org
Access is free of charge.

CANnet

The Child Abuse and Neglect Network allows professionals working in the fields of child maltreatment and child welfare easy access to information from the Child Abuse and Neglect Clearinghouse and the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN).
Contact CANnet for a UserID:
via phone: 800-394-3366
via e-mail: nccanch@clark.net

National Criminal Justice Reference Services (NCJRS) Online Services

NCJRS Bulletin Board Services:

via modem:
301-738-8895 or via telnet to bbs.ncjrs.org or via gopher to ncjrs.org:71

NCJRS Anonymous FTP:
ftp://ncjrs.org/pub/ncjrs

JUST INFO Electronic Newsletter:
listproc@ncjrs.org

Information/assistance via e-mail:
NCJRS general information —
look@ncjrs.org

Answers to questions—
askncjrs@ncjrs.org

Additional Readings

Additional Readings

1. Preventing Juvenile Gun Violence in Schools:

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Contact Information

Contact Information

Recognizing that each of you—whether you are a parent, school administrator, teacher, or community or business leader—can be at the forefront of making schools safer and more conducive to high-quality teaching and learning, we invite your suggestions on topics and issues that would be most helpful for future Information Briefs to help you implement your own programs to achieve safe and orderly schools. Please feel free to contact us at the locations listed below.

Department of Education:

Via Internet:
SAFESCHL@ed.gov

By regular mail:
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202–6123

Department of Justice:

By regular mail:
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Office of the Administrator
U.S. Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20531

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